LABOR AGE

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THE VOICE OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR

Labor's Dollars

LOUIS STANLEY

The Rise and Decline of the A. F. of L.

DAVID J. SAPOSS

Business Depression Under Capitalism—1930

WILLIAM L. NUNN

Past Achievements and Future Prospects of the A. F. of L.

A Symposium

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Vol. XIX—No. 10 ***October, 1930***

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IN THIS ISSUE

THIS issue is devoted almost exclusively to the proceedings of the Annual Labor Day Conference held at Brookwood, Katonah, N. Y., on August 30, 31 and September 1. C. P. L. A. conferences are assuming a unique and important place in the history of American labor. For objective analyses of current labor developments there are few gatherings as worthwhile. In addition, they are the best source through which a comprehensive knowledge of the advance of the progressive cause can be gained. The main articles published in this issue are of speeches made at the conference.

STARTING out with a review and a possible prophecy, William L. Nunn, Economics Department of New York University, looks about with the eye of the expert and finds little with which to encourage the hopeless who have failed to find in Hoover efficiency the substantial stuff from which wages are drawn. In "Business Depression Under Capitalism—1930," he quotes charts and graphs and curves —as well as men and things—to show concretely how deep is the depression and suggests a way out. Mr. Nunn's article is an exceedingly human document.

IT is unfortunate that when David J. Saposs, labor historian, teacher and author, made his speech on "The Rise and Decline of the A. F. of L." there was no radio hookup through which his words could have been broadcast to the nation. By general acclaim his scholarly presentation of the history and adopted policies of the American Federation of Labor was the best interpretation of the fortunes of American labor ever enunciated.

Mr. Saposs weighs the effectiveness of the A. F. of L. not by the standards set up by the radicals but by those of the labor leaders themselves. His conclusions should be read by every one interested in the labor problem.

A JOB that long has awaited the researches of a competent labor investigator has finally been undertaken and the results finding their first public appearance in "Organized Labor's Dollars" by Louis Stanley. There are few who attend as many labor meetings, conferences and conventions and who pore so assiduously over as many labor documents as does the author of this article. The facts he presents were secured after the most painstaking efforts. The story he tells is from the first chapter of a forthcoming book on the trade union movement and the money it gets and how it is spent. The readers will be astounded at the revelations disclosed. Louis Stanley received his B.S. degree at the College of the City of New York, his M.A. at Columbia University, was a Garth Fellow in Political Economy in Columbia University, on the editorial staffs of many labor publications and at present is on the teaching staff of the Rand School of Social Science.

WINDING up the conference A. J. Muste took under consideration the functions of progressives within the Labor Movement with special reference to the Conference for Progressive Labor Action. He answers critics who wonder why the Labor Day conference took up the topics discussed and proceeds to emphasize the policies a progressive group must pursue to be effective in "The A. F. of L., the C. P. L. A. and the Future."

SOME of the most interesting incidents of the conference, to which there is not sufficient space for individual attention, is related in "Labor Day Conference," which is the story of the conference as a whole. There can be found the steps by which the Conference for Progressive Labor Action is making progress in the advancement of its policies. There the field men of the organization make their reports, constituting the live material from the labor front. It is a completed picture of the conference.

THE American Federation of Labor is meeting in Convention this month in what it designates as its "golden jubilee" year. An estimate of general opinion regarding the achievements of the A. F. of L. is therefore very much in order. LABOR AGE is running a symposium in this issue on "Past Achievements and Future Prospects of the A. F. of L." to which labor leaders, editors, and labor students are making original contributions. Only in two instances are the contributions reprints of parts of articles appearing in other publications. Invitations to participate in this symposium were sent to William Green, President of the A. F. of L., and to B. C. Vladeck, Manager of the JEWISH DAILY FORWARD. They both excused themselves on the ground of lack of time.

THE story on Russia published in the September LABOR AGE aroused quite a bit of controversial comment among our readers. Some of the contributions are published in "What Our Readers Think."

DUE to the amount of space needed for the speeches and stories about the Labor Day Conference some of our usual features were crowded out of this issue.

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·LABOR·AGE·

October, 1930

EDITORIALS

ONE by one the illusions by which the American people, including millions of workers, got themselves into the notion that prosperity in the United States was permanent and unassailable, break down. There was one illusion which we have been permitted to hug to our bosoms after even Hoover, Mellon and Moose Davis had admitted that the depression was real and which was supposed to make it certain that the depression would be short, namely, the idea that there were no big frozen inventories on the shelves of our factories and in warehouses which would have to be disposed of at cut rates before factory wheels could be started up again. But it seems we have been deliberately deceived on this point also, or otherwise that our great captains of industry are after all densely and stupidly ignorant of the larger aspects of our economic system.

Another Prosperity Illusion Gone

The NEW REPUBLIC for September 10 gives figures as to the inventories of a number of well-known corporations in 1929 as compared to 1919. The list includes the following:

Sears Roebuck & Co.—An inventory of 43 million at the end of 1919; 78 million at the end of 1929.

Montgomery Ward & Co.—28 million in 1919; 67 million in 1929.

General Motors—129 million in 1919, 188 million in 1929.

U. S. Steel Corporation—227 million in 1919; 289 million in 1929.

Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.—36 million in 1919; 66 million in 1929.

Furthermore, "stocks in a wide range of industries, instead of being reduced in the early months of depression, actually increased. Severe as was the cutting down of production by discharges, lay-offs, shorter weeks and extended vacations, sales fell off even more rapidly in a great range of businesses." In the automobile industry, which was supposed to be putting its house in order very rapidly, passenger car production has exceeded the registrations in each month of 1930.

In other words, get ready for a long depression, brothers, as well as a severe one and while you are not so busy ponder this question: Is it really likely that the men and forces which brought the horror of the Great War upon the world in 1914 to 1918 and which brought the horror of a world-wide depression upon us in 1929, are capable of ruling our destinies? Might it not be better for the workers to organize and take control of industry before it is too late?

THE convention of the United Textile Workers of America held during the past month was notable as the largest in a number of years. It was also the first one in some time at which there was a substantial representation of Southern delegates. A southern man, Rufus Moseley of Danville, Va., was added to the Executive Board. Among those reelected was Carl Holderman of the Hosiery Workers, a vice-president of the C. P. L. A.

Crisis in The South

Though it is quite clear from reports made to the convention by F. J. Gorman, first vice-president of the U. T. W. and a member of the A. F. of L.'s Southern campaign committee, that there has been no very great increase in union membership in the South, either among textile workers or in other groups, this may be largely explained by the terrific depression which has hit that section of the country. The officers of the U. T. W. have made it abundantly clear, however, that there must be "a showdown" in the South soon. They cannot go on much longer asking Southern workers to join the union and then have them laid off, evicted out of company houses, confronted with yellow-dog contracts, etc., as is the case in Danville, Leaksville, Spray, Greensboro; in fact, in nearly every center where real organization work is attempted. The task of providing relief for union members thus laid off, no less than 2,500 in Danville at the moment, becomes as great as in an actual strike or lockout, but without the same possibility of dramatizing the struggle and getting funds from all over the country.

A battle, then, is impending. Much thought and work on the part of the U. T. W. has gone into its preparation. When it breaks, labor everywhere should rally to their support. We question seriously, however, whether such a struggle can possibly succeed unless spread over a wide front. It is true that supporting large numbers of strikers is a big job, but it is even more true if employers are tackled one at a time they can all rally to the one under fire and wear out the union completely in a series of futile efforts. Certainly the U. T. W. will lose the confidence of Southern workers and the A. F. of L. campaign will prove a tragic farce if there is not now a clearcut fight, ending either in honorable defeat or in a settlement bringing a substantial gain to the workers. The pledge made at the bier of the six martyrs of Marion, slaughtered just a year ago this month, calls for renewed and sincere effort. There must be an end of dubious settlements such as the one in Elizabethton where the way was opened for the rayon corporation to build a company union under the very nose of the U. T. W.

PRESIDENT GREEN'S violent denunciation of unemployment insurance, expressing the views of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, is a little bit too drastic, from even such a syndicalist source as the A. F. of L. We join those who look in wonderment at this latest display of choler by the heads of the official Labor Movement.

Soup Kitchens vs. Insurance Benefits

Why, we may ask, is unemployment insurance worse than old age pensions, for the establishment of which the A. F. of L. takes credit? Why, again we query, is unemployment insurance worse than soup kitchens and bread lines? Why is unemployment insurance a dole and private charity commendable?

We do not here attempt to answer any of these questions. A statement issued by the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, pointing out the fallacy of Mr. Green's reasoning, is published elsewhere in this issue. But does the American Federation of Labor really stand for soup kitchens as against insurance benefits?

We think not. Despite the official attitude, local labor bodies are thinking otherwise. The New York State Federation of Labor approves of unemployment insurance. So does the Rhode Island State Federation of Labor. So does the Amalgamated Lithographers. So do the Railway Brotherhoods, the Wisconsin Federation of Labor and the American Federation of Teachers. So does the United Hebrew Trades of New York City. So do numerous other labor unions and many, many labor publications whose columns have been filled recently with news stories and articles favoring unemployment insurance.

Whatever may have caused the Executive Council to make this drastic gesture against unemployment insurance, the force of general labor public opinion will cause it to change its views on this particular piece of social legislation as it did on old age pensions.

THE sessions of the New York State Federation of Labor held in Buffalo toward the end of August were a victory celebration. At every meeting the joy of the officers and many of the delegates at the achievements of the non-partisan policy during the past year found expression. The opponents of independent political action will have to admit, therefore, that this a fair year from their standpoint to test out the efficiency of their policy. IF THE NON-PARTISAN POLICY ACCOMPLISHED LITTLE IN THIS YEAR, WHICH ITS ADVOCATES CLAIM TO BE THE MOST SUCCESSFUL EVER, THEN SURELY IT IS HIGH TIME THAT THE LABOR MOVEMENT SHOULD TRY SOME OTHER COURSE.

The Non-Partisan Policy in Practice

The three chief victories for the non-partisan policy in New York State were: first, a bill providing that on grade crossing elimination work in the state "the prevailing rate of wages," that is, the union rate, shall be paid (which means several millions in wages to the workers of the state); second, provision of an old age security law which provides cash relief for some of the aged in the state; and third, passage of a bill forbidding the issuance of injunctions in labor disputes until both sides have had a hearing in court. There is no disputing that these are gains, and fairly important ones.

What about the other side of the balance sheet? The old age security law provides charity, a dole for the workers—it is not a pension. Governor Roosevelt himself, not so enthusiastic about the year's achievements as the labor leaders, called it "a very small step in the right direction." While the law that no injunctions shall be issued in a labor dispute until both sides have had a hearing in court is important, we note that no other limitation is put on the issuance of injunctions, and that the right to trial by jury in contempt cases in connection with such injunctions was not obtained. Furthermore, the small measure of anti-injunction legislation that was gotten was in one state out of forty-eight, and not a bit of progress with anti-injunction legislation was made in the Federal Congress. This last is serious because so many disputes now can possibly be said to involve interstate commerce that even if the new law makes it somewhat more difficult for an employer to get an injunction from a state court, he can easily find a federal judge to slap one on for him. Nor is this all. Labor should have learned by this time that little reliance can be placed on labor legislation, when capitalist judges and executives are to do the interpreting and applying. How enthusiastically the Clayton Act was once hailed as the Magna Charta of Labor!

SO Much for legislation which the New York State Federation of Labor obtained this year. With many of the bills placed in the forefront of its legislation program it got nowhere at all. It did not get its law declaring that labor is not a commodity. It did not get the State Legislature's endorsement of the child labor amendment. It did not get the exclusive state fund for workmen's compensation insurance. It did not get occupational diseases placed as a class under the workmen's compensation act. It failed to get a straight 48-hour week for women and children. It did not get a bill compelling the private employment agencies to inform applicants for jobs where a strike is in progress.

And at what a price did labor, through its non-partisan policy, obtain the gains about which it boasts with such boyish enthusiasm, and which seem big only in comparison with the even smaller gains of previous years? The price paid is that leadership in matters of interest to the workers is in the hands of the old parties instead of in labor's own hands. For example, on Tuesday of convention week President Green of the A. F. of L. speaks on remedies for unemployment and carefully avoids reference to unemployment insurance. On Wednesday Governor Roosevelt, leader of the Democratic party, devotes most of his address before the convention to a plea for unemployment insurance and announces that he will definitely move in that direction. On Thursday the New York State Federation of Labor endorses unemployment insurance! When the politicians give the lead labor knows what to do under the non-partisan policy. And the lead the politicians give is seldom even so progressive as Governor Roosevelt's mild gesture with regard to unemployment insurance. In New York City the price paid by labor for its adherence to its non-partisan policy is a thick and thin alliance with Tammany, even at this moment when the disclosures of its corruption are again a stench in the nostrils of all thinking people. Are you so sure, leaders of the A. F. of L., that the workers would have a great deal to lose by the abandonment of this policy?

Relief for An International President

HARD times are hitting President A. O. Wharton of the International Association of Machinists, among others. His salary, it appears, is only $7,500 a year, a mere pittance in this era of Hoover prosperity. But it looks as though relief were in sight. A referendum has been initiated by Atlanta Lodge No. 1, supported by 35 other lodges of the I. A. of M. in the South, proposing that his salary be increased to $12,000 per year, and it seems likely that President Wharton will therefore soon be rescued from the abysmal poverty in which he now finds himself.

Pitiable as Brother Wharton's condition must be, we hope that he does not get his fat 65 per cent raise. If it is voted him we pray he may have the grace to refuse it. A jump from $7,500 to $12,000 in a labor leader's salary at a time when even skilled workers average only about $40 per week, when millions receive less than $20 per week and millions are actually walking the streets, out of a job and starving is an outrage, a crime, a colossal insult flung in the face of the workers. If President Wharton accepts it, he puts himself in a class with John L. Lewis of the U. M. W. A., who accepted a salary increase a few years ago when thousands of his own members were on strike and enduring bitter poverty.

The chief argument the representatives of the I. A. of M. sponsoring this increase offer in favor of it is that other unions with equal or similar membership pay larger salaries than President Wharton is getting. The argument is a poor one. These salaries are already too high. The only way to get distinction under the circumstances is to maintain a salary nearer to a decency level.

Our readers may be interested to know what some of these salaries are. THE PRESIDENTS OF THE BARBERS, PLASTERERS, PLUMBERS, AND TELEGRAPHERS UNIONS GET $10,000 PER ANNUM; THE HEADS OF THE ELEVATOR CONSTRUCTORS AND UNITED GARMENT WORKERS $12,000; THE PRESIDENTS OF THE TRAIN SERVICE BROTHERHOODS ON THE RAILROADS $12,000 to $14,000; THOSE OF THE BRIDGE AND STRUCTURAL IRON WORKERS AND OPERATING ENGINEERS $15,000; THE PRESIDENT OF THE THEATRICAL STAGE EMPLOYEES $20,000 PER YEAR.

President Wharton is a very efficient trade union president, much more deserving of a high salary, if that is to be the criterion of merit in the Labor Movement, than many international presidents we know. He has in the past, both as a union organizer and as a member of the U. S. Railroad Labor Board, rendered some signal service to the workers. Lately he has laid aside many of his progressive ideas and is tending to become a pure and simple trade unionist, trying to make the I. A. of M. a closed corporation of skilled machinists, paying very little attention, if any whatever, to the mass of unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the trade. The proposed increase in his salary will not, we fear, give rebirth to his militancy and progressivism.

Vision and Audacity Wanted

THE UNION LABOR NEWS, official organ of the Central Labor Council of Santa Barbara County, Cal., in a column length editorial published in its issue of September 6, becomes alarmed over the uncertainty of the future.

"With changes taking place so rapidly," it starts out, "that the old order is disappearing before our own eyes, and while innovations, new ideas and new methods are struggling with one another for mastery, it is quite in order for thinking people to pause and consider the laying of more secure foundations for the future than exist at present."

"There must come a day of reckoning," the warning is sounded, "but who is there who can foretell at this time what form the upheaval will take, when it will occur or in what direction it will go?" There is the fate of Russia, China and South America to ponder over.

Therefore, the solution must be equal to the problem. Now, when the very foundations of the existing order are shaking; when six or seven million workers are tramping the streets with hungry families at home demanding bread we must with great courage institute those remedies that will squarely meet the situation. Every community must employ home talent:

"This a step in the right direction of protecting home citizens that is sorely needed right now. The same idea should be extended and applied as far as possible to private work," exhorts the editor.

It is because Labor asks for so little that it gets so much less. It is because Labor is afraid to lift its eyes above the horizon that the light of its genius fails to shine. It is because there is no imagination, no vision and no courage that crumbs are gratefully regarded as ambrosia.

A world is in despair, and all we need as a cure, is a meek and myopic brand of local patriotism!

Socialist "Militants" Plan

A GROUP of over 100 young Socialist Party members who have been described as "militants" and are now accepting that title, met at Camp Eden near Cold Spring, N. Y., recently for a week-end discussion of Socialist Party problems and policies. The leader of the conference, Louis Stanley, member of the Rand School faculty, contributing editor of the NEW LEADER and active member of the C. P. L. A., sounded the slogan "Socialism In Our Time."

There seems to have been general agreement among them that there was a danger that Socialist Parties both here and abroad might succumb to complete acceptance of the "inevitability of gradualness," because, too absorbed largely in relatively unimportant details of municipal administration, they lose sight of the primary task of building a Socialist economic and political order to replace capitalism, and lose the militancy and the missionary fervor characteristic of the Socialist movement in an earlier day. It is interesting to note that prominent members and municipal office-holders from Reading, Pa., where a Socialist administration is actually in office, largely shared in this view. On the other hand, great stress was laid on the need of "years of hard research work and hard thinking" in order that the militant program might be intelligently planned and executed.

LABOR AGE is deeply interested in every manifestation of vigor and militancy in any section of the general Labor Movement, and especially among young laborites, and thus records with satisfaction the holding of the Camp Eden Conference.

Business Depression Under Capitalism-1930

By WILLIAM L. NUNN

WE have much to criticize in this year 1930. It is a depression year. The more we examine it the more depressing it becomes. Our study of the business cycle has led us to expect certain changes during the depression period, some of them relevant to our problem and some not. Briefly, we expect to see a falling price level, a lowering of wages, an increase in bankruptcies, much unemployment, a decrease in purchasing power, stagnation in production, uncertainty of prediction, less consumption — especially in luxury goods, a lower standard of life generally, foreclosures of mortgages, a higher death rate, an increased number of suicides, more fires—especially of residences which have been insured, few marriages, fewer university students, more male students entering schools of education and fewer male students entering schools of commerce, and goodness knows what else. I admit that this list does not make the cause and effect relationship quite clear, but neither did the statements of Mr. Hoover.

It is fortunate that commercial houses are just now in the process of releasing to the public their semi-annual reports. From these and other reports I have taken data relevant to our problem, not to forecast scientifically or predict, but merely to illustrate present conditions.

For example one learns:

1. Pig iron production, always an excellent business barometer, was off 17.8 per cent during the first seven months of the year. Production for August started off at the lowest daily rate in nearly six years. Steel ingot production last week reached 53 per cent of theoretical capacity.

2. Bradstreet shows that bank clearings for the first six months were off 16.9 per cent in New York City, and 14.9 per cent for the entire country.

Autos on Toboggan

3. Motor car production is down 31 per cent. Unconfirmed reports state that Ford is soon to shut down completely.

4. In the Mid-West, construction was down 42 per cent for the first seven months of the year; for the United States as a whole, down 22 per cent. Since we have heard so much about the construction of public works at this time, it is interesting to note that public works have averaged, for the summer so far, 53 per cent of the total engineering construction. The whole truth, which has not been stressed, is that public construction in the best years has averaged 40 per cent of the total, leaving a differential of only 13 per cent. Bank and Building and Loan Associations are now over-

CONFERENCE SPEAKER

WILLIAM L. NUNN

Shows the failure of Big Business to stop depression.

loaded with property secured by foreclosures. The construction field is considered over-built. In this connection, strangely enough, despite the low rate of interest generally, the rate on first mortgages hangs around 5½ and 6 per cent, and on second mortgages jumps a couple of points.

5. July foreign trade was the lowest in ten years. Our exports amounted to $269,000,000 and our imports to $219,000,000. This is 30 per cent off from the corresponding period in 1930. The tariff, I expect, has little to do with this.

6. Freight car loadings are reported to be lower than at any time since 1921-22.

7. Just to what extent the depression has affected wage rates is somewhat problematical, but that the depression has affected wage rates is not to be doubted. A list of the companies which have cut wages shows them to represent practically every industry. I do not have to remind you that our economic set-up is such that wages will be reduced whenever dividends are threatened. Especially is this true in non-union industries where the employer has the upper hand by a wide margin. Moreover, the promises given to Mr. Hoover by the more potent employers of labor, to the effect that wages would not be reduced. have been, for the most part, treated as mere scraps of paper. I have noticed that certain house organs and trade journals have decried the cutting of wages where actual time and piece rates have been cut, but I have yet to notice any strong complaint when workers have been put on part time. Because of its prevalence, this has done more to decrease the workers' purchasing power than direct wage cuts. Factory payrolls are now at their lowest point since 1922.

Juggling Jobless Figures

8. Our "Happiness Boys," to use Mr. Villard's phrase, by unwarranted optimism and direct deceit, have not been able to obscure completely the fact of unemployment, breadlines, and dire distress. Estimates of the unemployed range from 1,500,000 to 6,000,000. A part of this difference arises from the varying definitions of the term, but even more important has been the policy of the government spokesmen consistently to minimize the extent of unemployment. One can not excuse the Census Bureau for its part in this. Professor Persons in resigning from the bureau said, "I quit the service when I found that efforts were being made to reduce the number of unemployed to the number of jobless workers." As long as the government wilfully fails to recognize the existence of a problem, it is hopeless to expect that government to take any steps to eradicate it. There seems to be little doubt about the fact that the situation is somewhat worse this summer than it was in the corresponding period of the 1920-21 depression

Agriculture has been able to absorb relatively few industrial workers looking for jobs. This can be accounted for by the present agricultural situation and also by the mechanization of agriculture which has occurred over the last ten years.

9. Commodity prices show a decline of about 14 per cent. This is probably not in ratio to decreased earnings.

So much then for the problem. The question now is how long will the depression last, and what can be done about it.

We might look first for some developing situation that will start an upward swing. We have stated that our foreign trade is off. What are the prospects in this field? The fact that the depression is rather world wide, coupled with the American tariff and its cumulative reprisals, can not be made into a picture full of sunshine. The deflation of foreign trade has been somewhat further acccentuated by our State Department which has, for the present at least, effectively curbed exports to Russia, a country that is in a position to purchase in quantities sufficient to influence the general business complexion of certain American industries.

The agricultural situation is such that we need not expect the farmer, due to his present low purchasing power, to stimulate the market. Wheat sold for less than it has in 16 years, when wagon prices dropped to below 65 cents a bushel. Cotton, down to 12 cents a pound, is 33 1-3 per cent under last year's level. There is no such thing as a uniform cost of production for wheat or for cotton. The industrialized wheat farms have a cost of production ranging from 20 to 30 cents a bushel. But there are few of these. Where farming is a manner of living as well as an industry, which is typical of American agriculture, the cost of production is around 80 cents a bushel. The bulk of the farmers in the South figure an average cost of production that runs to 18 cents a pound for cotton. The United States Department of Agriculture estimates that the Kansas wheat crop, which last year sold for $137,000,000, will this year bring in only $80,000,000. With the farmer's basic money crops so affected by over-production, to use an incongruous term, and his other crops badly damaged by the prolonged summer droughts, the farmer can not be expected to increase the general consumption of goods. Rather, he has become a part of the problem, no less than the industrial worker.

HIS DREAM OF HEAVEN

Chicago Tribune

Almost the only encouraging factor is that frozen inventories of merchants and manufacturers are slowly thawing out. With the consumption of goods now in the market, factory wheels will begin to turn. This consumption, however, will be greatly retarded by the low purchasing power of the bulk of the industrial workers and the farmers, as well as by the lack of foreign purchasers.

It is to be expected that the autumn months will show a slight recovery. This will be entirely a seasonal trend, and from present indications will not carry over into the winter. It might be noted that Mr. Babson is not of this opinion. The very slight increase in steel operations perhaps heralds this seasonal increase.

Predictions Are Risky

Forecasting, at best, is a risky business. If you doubt this I suggest that you look over the statements of President Hoover during the last ten months. On a basis of nothing more than a desire for prosperity, Mr. Hoover predicted prosperity, so certain people, differing politically from Mr. Hoover, have recently been predicting the continuance of depression. The latter have predicted that we are entering a long dark winter which will continue indefinitely, that the situation will not right itself, that the business cycle will not swing upward. I am reminded of Professor Irving Fisher and Mr. Waddell Catchins, to mention only two more of those who led the pack of "New Era" men right up to the doors of the stock exchange on the very day of the Wall Street crash. Time has proven their error; time may even prove the error of "Gloom Forecasters."

But let us grant that the next seven or eight years will give back to us the prosperity of 1927-28-29. I don't suppose that even then we shall have reached a utopia. The amazing thing to me is the number of sincere people who are thinking only of this present depression and how it can be shaken off. If that can only be done, all will be well. As a matter of fact, all will not be well. Think back to the last period of so-called prosperity, of the conditions in the American basic industries, especially in the coal, steel,

and textile centers. Only the Calvin Coolidges of the nation could look upon the spectacle and proclaim that all was well. When commodity prices are rising, when the wheels of industry are in motion, when the country goes bullish, we have relative prosperity, not absolute prosperity. However important the business cycle may loom up just now, the fact must be stressed that it is only one of the social phenomena peculiarly an integral part of an uncontrolled capitalistic economy.

I am not especially prepared to argue that capitalism can not control the business cycle. It is evident that it has not done so. When one examines the profit motive, private property, individual initiative institutions, which are the pillar stones of capitalism, the reason will be most evident. In America we have no scarcity of raw materials, no scarcity of factories and machines, no scarcity of credit, no scarcity of consumers, and of course no scarcity of workers. Our competitive system has simply failed, as it has in the past, and as it probably will in the future, to provide stable business and industrial conditions by co-ordinating these factors of production.

We are familiar with the program to check the downward trend of business during this depression advanced by those who are in control of our political and industrial life. It seems to me that the position which labor must take has been clearly defined by the failure of these programs.

We have already mentioned the failure of the employers as a whole to live up to the spirit of the agreements reached at the White House. The employers have reduced purchasing power by direct wage cuts, by slackening work, and by discharging men. The position can easily be defended that the profit motive system, rather than these employers, should be assailed. The entrepeneur is not engaged in promoting welfare, but in making money. His very existence depends not on the former, but on the latter. Only when profits are not interfered with can the enterpreneur be expected to promote the welfare of the workers to any material extent. Every one familiar with the general workings of our capitalistic system will agree that this is a fact. It is equally obvious that this fact may be altered by the passage of coercive legislation. Significantly, the C. P. L. A. owes its very existence to the belief that this can be done.

Unfulfilled Promises

When we were discussing building construction, the inference was made that promises of private construction of private works has been of little value. Enthusiastic promises, given in November, 1929, failed to materialize in 1930. Too, the plan of public construction of public works, however sound it may be in theory, has not been of much practical value in this depression. In general, it may be said that the necessary funds must be appropriated when legislatures are in session, bonds must be sold, contractors must make their estimates and their bids, materials must be ordered and delivered—all before actual construction has begun. To expect a slump to be checked after it begins, by the adoption of such a program, is to expect the impossible.

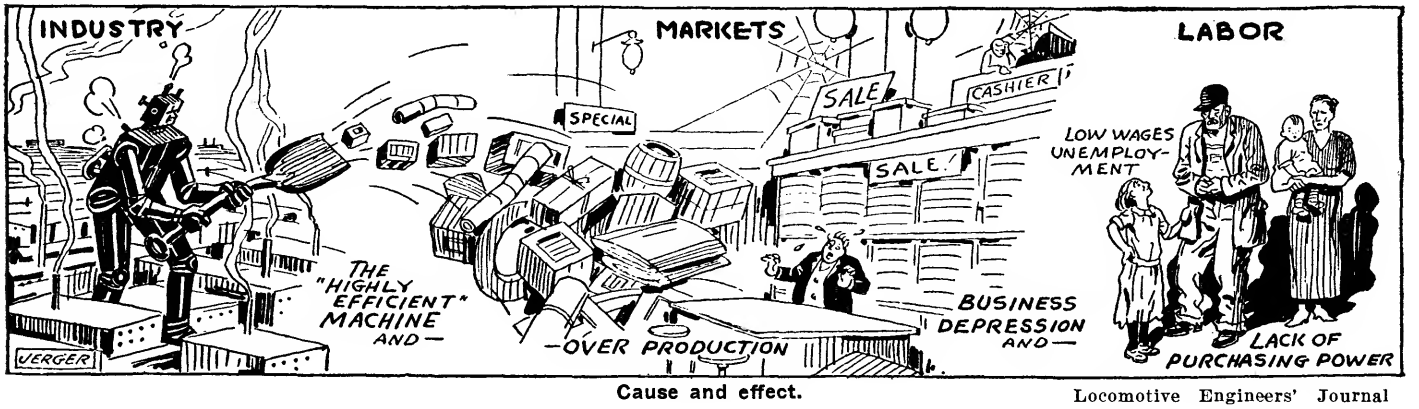
From the administration in Washington there came another plan, and that was a tax reduction. To give relief in a critical period of depression was not to establish free federal employment exchanges in every industrial area, not to press for tangible relief, but rather to give those least hit by the depression a tax reduction of $160,000,000, on income which had already been earned. This was supposed to give confidence to the business leaders in America!

All in all, we have relied on our economic system to correct itself. For those who suffer in the correcting process we have "organized charity," to keep the wolf from the door. Charitable associations, organized to cope with the by-products of our present economic order, have expanded with the development of industrialism. That this mutuality is well recognized has been shown in a recent study of the National Bureau of Economic Research, and perhaps even more so by the appeals for funds which went out from the New York Charity Organization Society during the past winter.

It is not my purpose to discuss the types of social legislation, the plans of governmental regulation and ownership, which would bring a systematic planning into a chaotic system. You are reasonably familiar with the general ideas involved. The paramount need is for the development of these ideas into more tangible and practical programs. But after these plans have been drawn up, what then? Their adoption calls for political action. Is it reasonable to expect these plans to be championed by either one of the old line political parties? The relationships which exist between the Democratic and Republican parties and those who contribute to their campaign funds are well known. Outstanding sociologists have pointed out the high degree of correlation between the number of dollars spent and the number of votes received per candidate. In past presidential elections, where data exists, only two candidates have secured the greatest number of votes who did not have the greatest amount of money to spend on their campaigns. It is true that progressive and liberal men exist in both political parties, but it is very obvious that they have been utterly unable to swing their fellow party members. The conclusion is drawn that neither party can be expected to champion any series of thoroughgoing reforms.

The present economic depression has again shown the intellectual bankruptcy of our political-industrial leaders, the defects of uncontrolled and planless production, distribution, and consumption. Whether or not it has

(Continued on Page 29)



Cause and effect.

Locomotive Engineers' Journal

The Rise and Decline of the American Federation of Labor

By **DAVID J. SAPOSS**

ON its "Golden Jubilee" it is certainly just to view the fortunes and vicissitudes of the American Federation of Labor in their historical perspective. There may be various criterions by which the successes and failures of the Federation may be gauged. Undoubtedly the fairest test would be by the objectives which the Federation has set for itself. Since it has become a power it has taken the unequivocal position that the workers should rely primarily upon union organization and action for the betterment of their conditions. Where it did recognize the need of other organized activities of the workers it insisted that they be subordinated to the union movement. Thus, when it found lobbying insufficient and inaugurated its non-partisan political policy this activity was kept under the direction of a Federation committee. Similarly when it interested itself in the Workers Education Bureau it finally enunciated the dictum that it was an auxiliary and must submit to control by the unions. In addition the Federation has counselled the workers not to quarrel with the present capitalist system but to work within it for the advancement of their immediate conditions. In other words, it advised the workers to eschew ultimate or anti-capitalist ideals. Therefore, the salient characteristic and objective of the Federation was conservative unionism, and it is only fair to judge its fifty years existence by this yard stick.

Early Years

In this connection the historic setting of the Labor Movement when the A. F. of L. appeared on the scene is significant. Although the Federation dates its existence to 1881 it really did not become an organization of great moment until its conflict with the Knights of Labor in the middle eighties, and it was only towards 1895 that it became the dominant organization in the American Labor Movement.

During this period when the Knights of Labor and the Socialists gave tone to the movement we find a generally wide awake Labor Movement. In addition to their unions, the workers were quite effectively organized on the cooperative and political fields, as well as in various auxiliary organizations. The labor press had probably reached a higher stage of development than it has ever before or since. The Labor Movement was a social force that affected all the important life activities of the workers. It permeated and influenced their entire social life and thought. This picture is presented to us by the Lynds, in their "Middletown." In that city in the 'nineties there was an effecitve Labor Movement. Politically the organized workers were a factor; they were organized in their clubs; they were active in their successful unions, and as an organized force they were respected as a power in the community. Then we get the picture of the situation in 1926, the year when they made their study. The movement is dead. There is little attendance at union meetings, the other organized activities of a purely working class nature had been abandoned, and the people are generally unaware of the fact that there is a Labor Movement in their midst. The unions, which according to the A. F. of L., are the mainstay of the workers, are even regarded with contempt and hostility. Here is a vivid cross sections of what happened to the Labor Movement since the American Federation of Labor came into power and set its tone and pace.

But to judge the Federation by its own criterion of conservative trade union action. Even this form of labor activity has become less effective as the A. F. of L. came completely to dominate the field. When the Federation came upon the scene the workers were becoming fairly well organized in all important industries. The Federation unions fell in with the procession and in its early years (up to about 1905) they extended their power and influence. Thus, we find them in general control of industry, enjoying union recognition and collective bargaining with even the most powerful firms. The unions experienced this favorable situation in spite of the discredit from which the movement suffered, presumably because of the Haymarket catastrophe and because of its previous adherence to reformism and radicalism. But as conservative unionism, as featured by the Federation, succeeded in establishing itself as a respected and conservative force praised by bankers, industrialists and politicians, within and without the National Civic Federation, it began to lose ground on the industrial field, which it considered as its chief channel of activity. Hence, we find unionism gradually being eliminated from most of the important industries.

Retreat Turns Into Rout

The first blow was struck in the metal trades where unionism was almost completely wiped out, although previous thereto the unions had national trade agreements with the powerful Metal Trades Association and the National Founders Association. Then came the struggle in the steel industry, and with similar reverses. Simultaneously unionism was practically completely wiped out in the packing industry. Indeed, within a few years of the last war we find unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor on the retreat. Moreover, the retreat turned into a rout so that conservative unionism was eliminated from the heart of all important industries and maintained a hold only on the fringe of these industries. (This occurrence was lost sight of because of the rapid expansion of industry, which accounts for the anamolous situation of the unions growing in membership and yet losing their hold in industry.)

During the war the situation changed momenatrily. Unionism again became established in nearly all important industries—steel and automobiles were the notable exceptions. However, this in itself attests to the fact that it was purely accidental that unionism came back. Then came the reaction with the open shop movement of 1920 and the staying power of conservative unionism was again put to the test.

What followed proved conclusively that conservative unionism is decadent, for within a short time unionism was again routed from most impor-

tant industries. Ship building, electric equipment, packing, etc.,—all going open shop. What is most serious in this rout as well as in that of prewar days is not so much the loss of strikes, the need to make concessions to employers, or even the loss of membership. All such reverses are to be expected. The weakness of conservative unionism is evidenced by the fact that all traces of unionism were completely wiped out so that they were not able to maintain even skeleton organizations. Unions have previously met with serious defeats, but by retaining their organization even in a weakened condition they came back again when an opportune occasion presented itself.

On the Fringe of Industry

At present, therefore, we have this discouraging situation. In the important industries the unions instead of operating in the heart operate on the fringe of industry. Since the strength of a union is gauged by the extent to which it controls the important markets over which it claims jurisdiction, most of the unions in the Federation are indeed weaklings. To illustrate: The Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen, claiming jurisdiction over the industry are no factor in the so-called trustified or integrated plants of Armour, Swift, Morris, and so on. Their membership at present comes chiefly from a few "independents," which means unimportant and small packing plants, and the remainder or the bulk of the membership comes from butchers employed in neighborhood butchershops. Similarly, the Amalagmated Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, claim jurisdiction over the steel industry, or at least over the most important occupations in that industry. At present this union exercises no influence in the plants owned by the United States Steel Corporation. The Bethlehem Steel Co., Jones & Laughlin, and the other powerful firms. Its membership is confined to the so-called "independents," that is the tiny steel mills, and it is even losing ground among these.

Thus, there has been a steady and dangerous decline in effectiveness of American unions so that most of them operate in tiny niches, ignoring completely the great bulk of the workers over whom they claim jurisdiction. Industry in general is neglected and the important firms and market centers are open shop. There are only a few industries that are substantially organized, such as the building trades, printing trades and amusement trades, and a few others that are fairly well organized as the needle trades, and certain branches of railroad workers. Outside of these the workers are unorganized except in the unimportant portions of industry.

Another evidence of the decline of conservative unionism is the fact that during the last unprecedented period of prosperity from 1925 to 1930 there was no increase in union membership. From the beginning of the Labor Movement it has always experienced a decline of union membership during periods of depression, and an increase of membership during periods of prosperity. Hence when the Federation lost so heavily in membership following the war its apologists sought cover under the fact that the country was undergoing a depression. But how would they explain the failure of the Federation to gain in membership in the succeeding period of prosperity?

AN EMBARRASSING MOMENT

Drawn for Labor Age by Jack Anderson

A. F. of L. delegates will have to forget all that Hoover stands for when they cheer his entrance to convention hall.

Indeed, if the unions had not padded their membership figures this last period of prosperity would have shown an actual decline. To illustrate: The United Mine Workers are still paying per capita on a membership of 400,000, when it is common knowledge that they do not have half that many.

Capitalist Conscious

Parallel to the decline in union power and influence came a significant change in philosophy of the American Federation of Labor. When the Federation broke away from the middle class influence of the Knights of Labor and the class-conscious influence of the Socialists it gradually developed its own philosophy. This became known as wage consciousness. It differed from the middle class and class-conscious philosophies in that these challenged the capitalist order. Wage consciousness while recognizing the inequalities and injustices of the capitalist system took the position that it would be better for the workers not to quarrel with it. This philosophy, therefore, counselled the workers to organize themselves into unions in order to better their immediate conditions, but not to concern themselves with their inevitable economic status as wage earners. Nevertheless, the philosophy of wage consciousness accepted the idea of the class struggle; namely, that the workers were destined to remain wage earners under a capitalistic system, and must struggle through organization to promote their interests. Immediately following the war the Federation was dislodged from this philosophic outlook. At first it was forced to endorse the Plumb Plan, which meant social ownership of the railroads, then it endorsed nationalization of mines, and finally it sponsored socialization of all industries. But the reaction set in very rapidly and then, instead of returning to wage consciousness, the Federation became capitalist conscious, in that it now became a staunch believer and defender of the capitalist order. At present it is fair to say that the outstanding leaders of the Federation and its affiliated unions proudly boast that they are the most zealous defenders of capitalism.

Abandons Liberal Elements

Since this change, we find that the Federation and its affiliated unions have begun to abandon even the elemental principles of liberalism. Certain recent events illustrate this change: During the period when the A. F. of L. was wage conscious it aligned itself on general social issues and problems with what might be termed the democratic elements. Thus it supported the Bryan movement, the LaFollette movement and other liberal causes. But now it has begun to disassociate itself from even these democratic elements and is bending all its energies to coalesce itself with the big capitalistic interests. To cite but a few instances: From the time that the A. F. of L. launched its non-partisan political activity, with the exception of the 1924 LaFollette Presidential campaign, which it supported, it endorsed the Democratic Presidential candidate. Yet in 1928, to the surprise of everybody, it failed to endorse Al. Smith. According to its historic policy and all logic the Federation should have supported him. The Democratic platform favored its legislative program, Al. Smith, as Governor of New York, did everything he could to foster that program. Besides, he was wet and he was Irish Catholic. Events since have clearly demonstrated that the Executive Council of the Federation failed to endorse him after a bitter internal controversy because those who dominate the policy of the Federation are anxious to cater and win the favor of the big interests. This also explains why President Green has been pinch hitting for Hoover on unemployment and other important social issues. It further explains why the Federation did not raise a protest against the appointment of Hughes as Chief Justice, and only was forced to oppose Parker's appointment because his record on the "yellow dog" contract was too flagrant, and because they knew that he would be opposed by the Progressive bloc in Congress which featured the Hughes attack.

Gradually the Federation is becoming estranged from the articulate political group that is championing liberalism in this country, namely, the Progressive bloc. They differ on the recognition of Soviet Russia, on the tariff, on water power and public utility regulation, and so on. In the recent primary campaign in Wisconsin the International Labor News Service, a semi-official A. F. of L. news agency, attacked Philip LaFollette and supported Governor Kohler, an industrialist and regular Hoover Republican. This change in philosophy has naturally been reflected in the trade union policies of the Federation so that now it no longer features the need for struggle and aggressive action in order to organize the workers and advance their interests. Instead it expects to convert the employers by showing them that it would be advantageous to them to recognize unions and permit their workers to organize.

Policy Spells Disintegration

We see, therefore, that since conservative unionism, as represented by the Federation, came into the saddle the movement has been steadily declining. Its only period of genuine growth and power from about 1895 to about 1907 is not attributable to its own ingenuity and capacity, but is traceable to the fact that it was riding on the crest of the wave of enthusiasm generated by the Socialists and Knights of Labor and the remainder of the Labor Movement which it superseded. As soon as this impetus spent itself it began to decline because it failed to realize that a movement cannot exist unless it has faith and ideals. A movement that is based purely on the narrow appeal of improving immediate conditions and disregards ultimate objectives cannot generate the requisite intangible idealism and the necessary emotional appeal that give life and vitality to a mass movement. And this general idealism in order to become deeply rooted in the feelings and thoughts of the masses must manifest itself in all their important life activities. This in turn means a completely rounded out Labor Movement so that the workers can gratify all their important needs and desires through the organized activities of the Labor Movement. That means, trade union, political cooperative, fraternal, sport, educational, dramatic organization, as well as a live labor press. By adhering to conservative unionism the Federation deliberately discouraged an all pervading labor ideal which included the need for improving the immediate conditions of the workers, as well as their natural aspirations for emancipation from wage slavery. At present even a good dues paying union member is more influenced, in so far as his social attitudes are concerned, by his lodge, church, fraternal order, old line political party, daily paper, movie, and so on, than by his union. And all these other agencies are either indifferent to the predicament and aspirations of labor or actually anti-labor. Now with the change in philosophy conservative unionism has deliberately surrendered the interests of the workers to capitalism.

In brief, not only is the reliance of the American Fedreation of Labor on only conservative trade union action bringing about its rapid decline; but its change in philosophy is making it an ally of the capitalistic interests, and a traitor to both liberalism and radicalism.

Organized Labor's Dollars

Little of A. F. of L.'s Income Spent for Actual Organization Work

By LOUIS STANLEY

ON the eve of the fifteenth annual convention of the American Federation of Labor which opens in Boston on October 6, it is well to take stock of the A. F. of L.'s accomplishments. I intend to devote myself to the industrial field.

The chart on the opposite page shows the number of charters issued by the A. F. of L. It begins with the year 1897, when the A. F. of L. practically superseded the Knights of Labor. You will notice that in the first few years of that period the number of charters issued was very great. If you read the proceedings you will find that they breathe a militant spirit. There is a certain amount of boasting. "We have organized so many unions." "We have so many organizers in the field." Now you will see that around 1904 or 1905 the A. F. of L. begins to suspend activity. Then, come the war years, and there is a spurt. The government mobilized the trade unions for the war. Within recent years the number of charters issued has dropped very low. Last year only 75 were granted. Now that is very significant.

The A. F. of L. started in 1881 as a body to carry on legislative activities. Its Executive Council was known as the Legislative Committee and was modeled after the Parliamentary Committee of the British Trades Union Congress. In 1886 it changed its structure and became the present A. F. of L. In drawing up its constitution it laid down the objects of the organization. In the second article it is stated that the purpose of the A. F. of L. is to organize local trade unions and bind them together into national trade unions. Threfore, it is well to test the success of the A. F. of L. by the extent to which it contributed as a central organization to the creating of local unions, and then integrating them into effective national and international unions.

Let us examine some statistics:

In 1897 there were organized 154 trade unions and 35 federal locals; in 1902, 598 trade unions and 279 labor unions; and in 1903, 743 local trade unions and 396 federal labor unions.

In 1920 the total was 527 trade unions and 243 federal unions.

In the 1921 depression the A. F. of L. chartered 148 trade unions and 63 federal unions.

Last year only 57 trade unions and 3 federal unions received charters.

Since 1897 and 1900 when the A. F. of L. was functioning as a militant organization the total number of directly affiliated local unions chartered each year has declined from a few hundred to 50, 60, 70, 90.

The same thing applies to the city central bodies created by the A. F. of L. Why is this? What is the significance of it?

A Startling Contrast

In 1900 the A. F. of L. spent $16,000 on organization expenses. Since that time the amount spent on organization work has increased to $100,000. When it used to spend $16,000 or $20,000 this is the result (see chart for those years)—and now note the difference on the chart!

What is the A. F. of L. doing with these local unions? The A. F. of L. has made these local unions, which are supposed to be a reservoir for the building of national unions, a source of income. These local unions have paid a per capita tax to the A. F. of L. of 35 cents per member per month since 1926. The national and international unions, these great unions, pay one cent per member per month. In addition to that, these local unions directly affiliated with the A. F. of L. have to give a proportion of their initiation fee to the A. F. of L., 25 per cent., but no less than $1.00. Then, there is a percentage of the reinstatement fee that the A. F. of L. receives.

When you take the total you find that in recent years these unions have been paying about $100,000 each year to the A. F. of L. You find that these unions contribute about one-fifth of the per capita tax paid to the A. F. of L., although last year they contributed nearer to an eighth.

One portion of the 35 cents per capita tax is not kept by the A. F. of L. directly. Twelve and one-half cents is placed in a Defense Fund, but 22½ cents goes into the A. F. of L. coffers.

What do these locals get for contributing so heavily to the A. F. of L.? I have mentioned the Defense Fund, which is supposed to protect them. Actually the unions very seldom apply to the A. F. of L. for financial help. There is a great deal of red tape. If you want to strike you have to do so when the time is ripe. They seldom apply to the A. F. of L. They take a chance.

Mulcting the Local Unions

You can readily see that when these local unions begin to grow a little they want to combine with other unions of their craft. Why should the A. F. of L. encourage them? The international unions pay one cent, while the local unions pay 35 cents per capita. When unions apply for national or international charters, they are discouraged. Excuses are found to frown upon their requests.

For instance, the Neckwear Makers carry on activities without the benefit of a national union. They have at various times formed local unions in a number of cities.

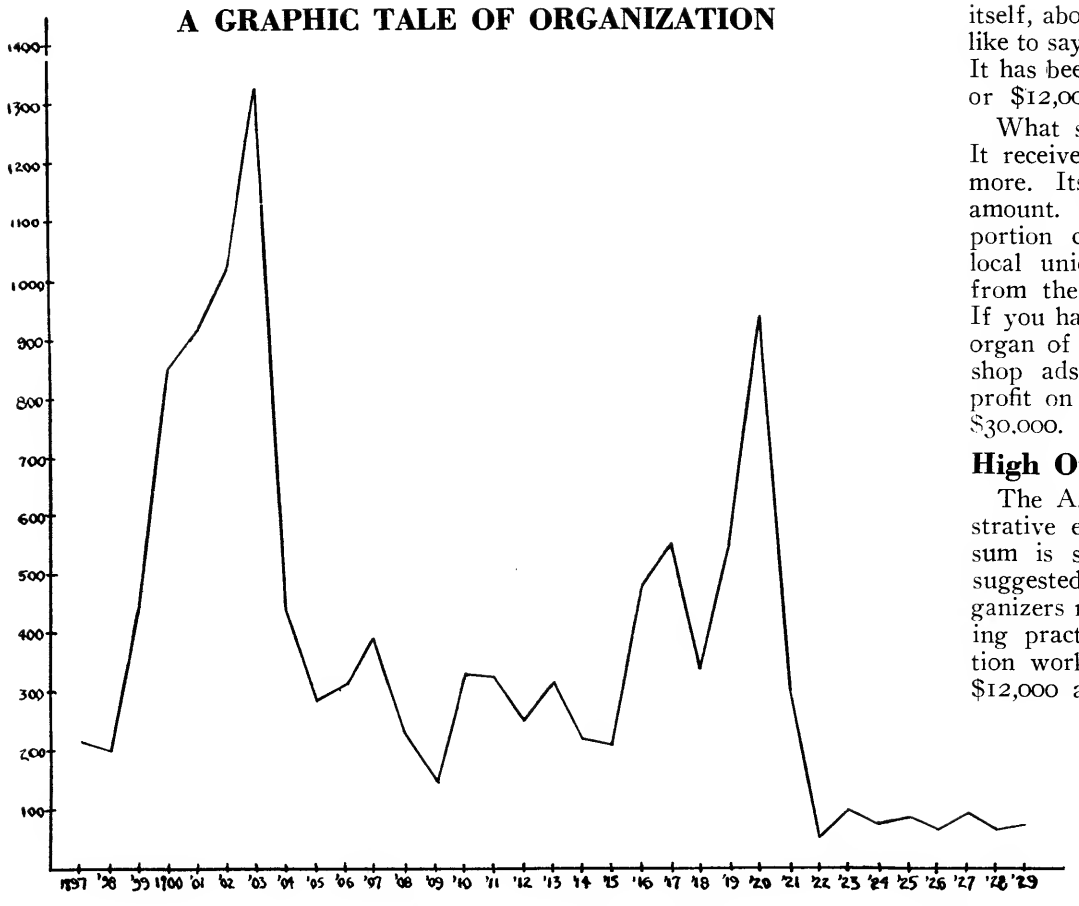
The Bookkeepers, Stenographers and Accountants' Unions consisting of twenty locals have applied time and time again. The A. F. of L. tells them "nothing doing." The Pocket Book Workers Union is another instance, and then there are the Pullman Porters.

The A. F. of L. has failed very miserably in its job of organizing the unorganized workers into the local trade and federal unions.

There is another aspect I want to discuss, namely, the relation of the A. F. of L. to international unions. The A. F. of L. is a federation of international unions. These are represented 99 per cent plus at conventions. If the A. F. of L. is to function as a central organization it has to help these international unions in time of disputes. If such unions are faced with an emergency they can call on the A. F. of L. for help. Under the constitution the A. F. of L. may levy an assessment of one cent per week for 10 weeks, and no more.

Since 1889 the A. F. of L. has collected through this source $387,000, or about $400,000. Here we have the A. F. of L., which is supposed to help these international unions fight the highly organized capitalism that we

A GRAPHIC TALE OF ORGANIZATION



Total number of charters issued by the American Federation of Labor, each year, 1897-1929. Most of these charters were issued to the directly affiliated local unions consisting of local or mixed unions out of which craft unions may be formed when there are enough members in any crafts.

have in the United States today, from the beginning of its history collecting only about $400,000 in helping internationals in times of real crisis.

In 1889 it raised 10 cents per capita for the carpenters.

In 1896, one cent for the eight hour campaign.

In 1898 there was an assessment to organize the South.

Others were for the Buck Stove and Range and the Danbury Hatters cases.

In 1914 and 1916 there were assessments to help organize the women workers, and in 1918 as an emergency war measure there was an assessment to meet the rise in administration cost of the A. F. of L.

The last assessment collected by the A. F. of L. was in 1918.

In 1926 when the A. F. of L. convention was held in Detroit it announced a campaign to fight the company unions and to break down the open shop control in the auto industry.

An Uncollected Assessment

It voted a special assessment to fight the company unions. That assessment authorized in 1926 has never been collected. Do you wonder why we have not had a centralized campaign?

Now we come to one of the heartening things—the voluntary collections.

In the steel strike the A. F. of L., by the method of donations, raised $427,000. It helped the anthracite miners with $200,000. In 1927-29 it raised $500,000.

Upon occasions the A. F. of L. has been able to get money in this voluntary fashion making a total during its entire history of $1,874,000 on a voluntary basis, as compared with $387,000 on a complusory basis.

Now, with regard to the Defense Fund. In 1929 there was reported as the total balance in the treasury of the A. F. of L.—$335,000. The A. F. of L. L., in other words, has to face the big corporations with this balance. Actually it is much worse off, because most of that money is set aside for the defense of the little local unions. This Defense Fund for these small unions amounts to about $279,000, leaving for the use of the A. F. of L. itself, about $56,000 and it is, I should like to say, larger than in former years. It has been down to as low as $11,000 or $12,000.

What should the A. F. of L. do? It receives an income of $500,000 or more. Its expenses are about the same amount. We have seen that a large portion comes from these exploited local unions. Another share comes from the AMERICAN FEDERATIONIST. If you have wondered why the official organ of the A. F. of L. carries open shop ads, remember there is a net profit on the magazine of $20,000 or $30,000.

High Overhead

The A. F. of L. has large administrative expenses. Almost the entire sum is spent on overhead. I have suggested that it has 20 or 30 organizers receiving $100,000 a year, doing practically nothing for organization work. President Green receives $12,000 a year and Secretary Morrison, $10,000.

When the C. P. L. A. at the time of the Toronto convention urged that the A. F. of L. raise three million dollars for the Southern campaign it was somewhat ridiculous when you take into account the financial background of the A. F. of L.

If the one cent per member per month were raised to two cents, more than a half million dollars could be raised annually. For about ten cents a month you could raise over three million dollars a year to fight the A. F. of L.'s battles.

But the international unions seem to be against raising the per capita tax. They seem to be interested in keeping their money to themselves. They do not even like to pay the present one cent per capita, except when they need voting strength at conventions.

The A. F. of L. is raising large sums of money and, as the figures show, doing practically nothing with them, so far as the A. F. of L.'s chief function is concerned. The organizers spend a lot of their time in political activity. $100,000 for this sort of work and practically nothing for the real job for which the A. F. of L. exists! If we are going to have a real movement, we must have a large reserve fund to carry on labor's fight.

Past Achievements and Future Prospects of the A. F. of L.

A Symposium

FACT FINDING AND PARTNERSHIP KEYS TO LABOR PROGRESS

By William Green

President, American Federation of Labor
(From Statement on the "Aims of Labor" in New York Times, August 31, 1930)

WHATEVER forces shape the life of one generation foreshadow the future. We may look for the forces that will condition life and work for labor of the coming years in those policies which will fix standards, freedom and capacity to make progress. These significant trends which constitute measuring rods of progress will show us of some of the things that are in the making; our high wage principle, the discovery that labor is a most important consumer, labor's right to be assured annual income, the idea of partnership in production, labor participation in leisure and culture, the development of tools to control the forces of progress.

The American Federation of Labor has been advancing labor's claim to share in the achievements of industry. Our extraordinary technical progress enables us to turn out an increased volume of production in shorter time per worker. Since the needs of the market are supplied in fewer hours of work here is a powerful opportunity for labor to enter into the dynamic possibilities of leisure with an increased income to take care of the needs of living.

If labor or any other group does not participate in the opportunities for social progress, it becomes a retarding influence that may block all progress. It is in social interest and necessary to national progress that labor mobilize its resources to keep abreast of economic and social progress. This means organization to formulate policies and to put them into effect. The organizations must be free to reflect the real needs and experiences of labor, competent to promote labor's interests in harmony with the sustained interests of all associated groups.

To carry out such a program, labor needs facts and records. These it assembles through its organized channels—the trade unions. The types of facts and records that will be useful depend upon the situation into which labor must fit. The major concern is unemployment.

To carry out this program each union must conduct educational work among its union membership. No union can sustain a rate of progress which does not reflect the thinking of its membership. The union of the future will be studying labor problems and bringing information and facts to bear upon their solution. Lack of information and knowing how to use facts is still the most definitive bar to progress. With information and its practical application, the lines between the work of wage earners and the work of technical and professional groups disappear.

Machines are the iron men that take over the physical toil of production and leave the human operative free to make intellectual contribution to the job. By developing appropriate vocational training and making the union an agency for securing for wage earners the status of partnership in production, the union is pointing the way to the elimination of the greatest waste in industry—waste of human capacity that might be released in work.

A CHASM TO BRIDGE

By Wallace M. Short

Editor, The Unionist and Public Forum, Sioux City, Ia.

FOR thirty years I have actively supported the things organized labor says it stands for. I have steadily, until recently, given approval to the official policies announced by the A. F. of L.

Gradually, since the war, I have seen the official A. F. of L. leadership losing its grip on the minds and hearts of the workers, both organized and unorganized. Such loyalty as remains is largely a matter of tradition. As an editor I still publish the A. F. of L. news; but the workers are largely indifferent to it. They feel toward it as they feel toward the Republican doctrine of Prosperity. Labor activities are falling into the same category with political activities—indulged in by those who seek some sort of gain or promotion for themselves.

The growth of the A. F. of L. can be secured only by winning the workers anew to policies and programs that kindle faith, enthusiasm, and the spirit of sacrificial service. The leaders must set the example. There must be an effective program of education; and an outlet for the latent political vision of the masses.

The distance between labor official circles and the workers is becoming as wide as the distance between the fifty-nine men whom Mr. Gerard says rule the country and the average voter. That chasm must be bridged. Labor officials have won the lip service of many employers to the doctrines of collective bargaining and high wages. But they have lost the minds and hearts of the workers as an industrial and social army to carry those doctrines into effect.

LABOR'S FUTURE IN RECOGNITION OF CAPITALISM

By John R. Commons

Professor of Economics, University of Wisconsin

I PERSONALLY know a few employing corporations, and I know of others by information, who follow consciously the policy of keeping off the unions of the American Federation of Labor by paying higher wages and furnishing better conditions than the unions could obtain. They say they beat the unions by beating them to it. The achievements of the Federation are not to be measured by the number of dues-paying members. They are to be measured also by the number benefited who pay nothing.

I personally tried to help forward a labor party in 1924 with as good an advocate of unionism as Ramsay Mc-

Donald. We carried a few cities and one state. I had studied all the labor parties that had sprung up during a hundred years in the United States and I knew what would happen. The Federation has its feet in the United States—not in Europe or the moon.

I have seen the yellow-dog contract outlawed only in a state where labor unions and farmers' cooperatives worked together outside political parties. They got enough votes from all parties and the approval of an anti-union big employer governor. They probably will get the support of the open-shop Supreme Court.

The American Federation of Labor is fitted to American conditions. It changes when conditions change, and about as fast as the rank and file will permit. It will be different when restriction of immigration has had time enough to permit organization in the great industries of unskilled labor. The Federation cannot be judged by European labor movements where all wage-earners are alike and equally oppressed.

No Labor Movement can cure unemployment. It weakens unions and makes labor parties ridiculous. It is world-wide and non-partisan. It requires world-wide concerted action of farmers, laborers, business men and bankers. Unions can do something to mitigate it but not cure it.

The Federation looks forward. I see promise of big things in union-management cooperation with employers, if there are not too many knockers who make the rank and file suspicious of leaders. This new policy needs strong unions, brave leaders and recognition of Capitalism.

ONLY C. P. L. A. PROGRAM CAN MAKE FOR PROGRESS

By Joseph Gilbert

Editor, The Nebraska Craftsman, official publication of Lincoln Central Labor Union, Lincoln, Neb.

WITHOUT in the least disparaging the earlier achievements of the American Federation of Labor it can be said that for several years past this organization has practically been marking time, showing no material increase in membership, while its influence, both industrially and politically, has been on the wane.

Its present plans appear to be no different from what has characterized it in the past, that of seeking to organize craft unions, despite the changing industrial order, and supplicating both the Republican and Democratic parties for political favors in return for the support of its membership. If this organization is to enjoy a future at all commensurate with its earlier history it must adapt itself without delay to modern industrial conditions, and proceed to develop greater strength. In order to do this it is necessary to organize the workers in the great basic industries, such as steel, automobiles, rubber, oil, textiles, etc., and as these are not susceptible of craft unionism, the workers must be organized into industrial unions.

Accompanying this campaign of organization must also be one of workers' education, teaching them their true relation in modern society and at the same time inspiring them to form a political party, controlled by themselves, which shall be a means of protecting and advancing every gain made by them on the industrial field, with the ultimate goal in view of self-activity, thus abolishing such present evils as unemployment and labor injunctions. Unless some such program is undertaken by the A. F. of L. this organization is destined to decline and perish.

LARGEST INDUSTRIES ARE CHALLENGE TO A. F. OF L.

By B. C. Vladeck

Manager, Jewish Daily Forward

(Translation of part of an article published in the Daily Forward, July 6, 1930)

THOUGH I am a "right winger," practical, sober and informed, yet when I read about President Green of the American Federation of Labor visiting West Point to address the officers, or when I hear about Matthew Woll preaching that the only way for a union to be successful is to help the employers, my heart pains as if torn by a dull saw.

I view the leadership of the A. F. of L. in the light of all that I know about America. For all their activities I have excuses and explanations. But deep down in my heart I know that all these excuses and explanations are only "smoke-screens." One overpowering and fundamental fact stands out which does not permit itself to be concealed, and that is that the American Federation of Labor does not today represent the interests of the working class of America. Not only has it not the principle by which to enlarge the influence of labor in the land, but it has even lost the technique. During the past years the A. F. of L. was found to be incapable of organizing one new trade or to maintain organization in those already organized. Everything said and done by the A. F. of L. is like a stream of ice-cold water poured upon the ambitions and hopes of the American workers.

There was a time when the American Federation of Labor, though it was much more "right" than the Socialists, was much more "left" than the liberals, especially on economic questions. Today, not only the Socialist movement but even the liberal movement are far more left than the American Federation of Labor. We, Socialists, not only dare not express this truth, but within recent times we have developed the habit of agreeing to everything the A. F. of L. leadership is saying and to dance around them in thorough accord.

Any one who dares to utter a peep of criticism against a leader of the American Federation of Labor is immediately condemned as a left winger. The A. F. of L. is considered a holy scroll which must be kissed, coming and going. Our nearest activities and nearest future will not depend on theoretical hair-splitting but on our relations to this fact: That for the largest industries in the country, the steel, textile, automobile and movie industries, they are practically entirely unorganized and what can even the organized workers do when their trades belong to the past?

RADICALS ONLY CAN SAVE MOVEMENT

By Ben Gitlow

National Secretary, Communist Party of the U. S. A. (Majority Party)

THE economic crisis, and the growing danger of imperialist war bring out very boldly the bankruptcy of the A. F. of L. as a workers' organization. The reactionary bureaucracy which dominates the organization has reduced it to impotency.

The present position in which the workers find themselves demands the immediate formation of a mighty rank and file opposition movement in the A. F. of L. against the wrong policies and rule of the reactionary bureaucrats. The Communists are committed to the development of such a movement. The reactionary bureaucrats are the most dastardly enemies of the workers and their organizations. They must be destroyed and driven out of the Labor Movement. In spite of the fact that the policies of the official Communist Party have helped to liquidate the Left Wing in the trade unions, it does not mean that

it will not be revived and built up again.

There are all the prerequisites today for the development of a mighty opposition movement in the A. F. of L. The membership of the A. F. of L. has been hit very badly by the economic crisis. Their discontent is growing. All that is lacking is the initiative of giving leadership to this discontent. This the Communists will supply even though the C. P. officially is against working in the A. F. of L. unions.

Those movements of progressives that put their faith in the bureaucracy and not in the rank and file will have to be swept aside.

The Socialist Party as a defender of the reactionary bureaucrats, and making up its leadership in the needle trade unions, will have to be fought most bitterly.

Unless the progressives, militant, and revolutionary forces can unite on a common program of action based upon the organization of the rank and file, the A. F. of L. will be reduced to complete impotency as a workers' economic organization and will become the center of the blackest reaction in the country.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS COULD BE GREATER

By Barnet Wolff

Manager, Pocket Book Workers' Union

NO doubt, I should have written to you before but I have been so busy and so badly pressed for time that I have not even had an opportunity to answer your letter Of course, I ought to write something as a contribution to your symposium for your next issue, but again pressure of time makes it almost impossible.

Then again, you ask that my contribution should consist of 200 words, and you make me think of a funny story. A preacher was once asked how long it takes him to prepare his Sunday sermon and his answer was: "It depends on how much time I am allowed in which to preach the sermon. If I am given unlimited time, I don't have to prepare at all. If I am allowed an hour or two, three days is ample; but if I must say all that I want to say in a few minutes, I require a long time, frequently a couple of weeks."

So, it seems to me is the task which you allotted to me. A 200-word estimate of the achievements and future prospects of the A. F. of L. is no small contract. We all agree that the achievements of the A. F. of L. have been considerable, but not nearly all that they should be. We all agree that it would be much healthier for the Labor Movement in the U. S. if the A. F. of L. were more radical, more militant, and more imbued with that spirit of class consciousness which seems to animate organized labor in other parts of the world. To support this contention in 200 words is impossible, and therefore I won't attempt to do it.

I want to conclude by saying that we all feel that LABOR AGE is doing good work and that we are happy to support you in your efforts.

If you can use this letter as a contribution, do so, and believe me that if I had an opportunity to give the matter the necessary time and thought, that I would have tried to do better for you.

AT THE FOOT OF THE CLASS

By Norman Thomas

Executive Director, League for Industrial Democracy

I DO not think any movement or organization of men can show such solid achievements in social betterment not only for its members but for an entire class as the organized Labor Movement. The worker without a union is either a serf without rights or a parasite who enjoys benefits won for him by other men.

But the best loyalty to a movement is to be constructively critical. Facts in America must arouse anxiety. Our great industrial nation is about at the foot of the class in the percentage of organized workers. Factory workers from steel or textiles are almost wholly unorganized. Miners, except miners of anthracite coal, are largely unorganized and the United Mine Workers in recent years have disastrously lost ground. The following forward steps are necessary.

(1) The substitution of industrial unions for out of date craft unions. (2) New zeal for organizing the unorganized and especially the colored workers who to a considerable extent are still discriminated against. (3) Better machinery for organizing the unorganized. Lack of any central machinery of strategy, legal defense, or relief was a large factor in the comparative failure of the Labor Movement to get more results out of the discontent of Southern workers in the summer of 1929. (4) A far bolder and more adequate program to be achieved by political as well as by industrial action. Unemployment and other forms of social insurance are a necessity for an effective organizing campaign among workers now bribed or terrorized by welfare plans of the bosses, as well as for achieving some justice for unemployed workers. (5) Independent political action by labor and its friends. The non-partisan system has got labor very little and for that little labor in some cases has almost lost its soul. Witness the fact that in New York City the only prominent defenders of Mayor Walker's failure to act on unemployment and of his outrageous salary grab were the president and secretary of the Central Trades and Labor Council. This is a fact which can unfortunately be matched in a great many other American cities.

MODERN METHODS NEEDED TO REDEEM LABOR MOVEMENT

By James Oneal

Editor, The New Leader, National Socialist Weekly

THE achievements of organized workers in recent years are not many and in this period of industrial depression they will be fortunate to hold what they have. Considering that the economic prostration is likely to continue for a number of years it is likely that the trade unions will be facing defensive struggles to avert parting with labor standards and conditions, at least in some measure.

What appears to me more important than anything else in the new situation that faces the organized working class is the need of abandoning the attitude towards the government and social legislation recently affirmed in the statement of President Green of the A. F. of L. If the working class are to be outcasts in legislative bodies on the grounds of an archaic theory that has no justification in this era of mass production, that means to leave the governing institutions exclusively in the hands of the enemy.

We may be sure that the exploiters of labor are perfectly satisfied with the voluntary exile of labor from legislative consideration. That decision leaves the employing class more free than ever to make the legislative bodies their own. We may be sure also that this class will take full advantage of the complete sovereignty which is conceded to that class. It acts upon no archaic theory, it is not hampered by any traditions of individualism that come down from the days of the ox cart and the hand tool.

The Labor Movement must also be modern in ideas, organization, and

methods if it is to make headway. It must assert its claim to political power through independent party organization, formulate its own program, fight for it, and take for its aim democratization of industry and liberation of the working class from the feudal obligarchy that is assuming giant proportions in this country.

A. F. OF L. FUTURE IN ITS PAST VIGOR

By Benjamin Stolberg

Critic, Labor Student, Journalist

TODAY the A. F. of L. is dying,—the oligarchy, of fatty degeneration of the heart and the rank and file, because of the oligarchy. Yet the historian of American labor must be fair to our trade union movement. The A. F. of L. has a future, though it is not the A. F. of L. of since the world war but of before it. Every great historic movement has a future, even though it may be invisible except in its past.

I am not one of those to discount the A. F. of L. of the militant Gompers' era as "reactionary." The America of the second industrial revolution, which was born in the civil war and lasted until about a decade after the Spanish-American war, produced some of the proudest phases of labor and social criticism. The early populisms were followed by vigorous Socialist movements. The Knights of Labor were followed by trade union militancy. And nowadays it cannot be denied that the primitive, syndicalist, trade union development from the mid-eighties to the mid-teens of this century were necessary and indigenous creations of American labor to assert itself in the face of the kind of buccaneer capitalism which the same industrial revolution had established. For their time and place these unions, in their thousands of locals, did good battle and the memories of these struggles are no doubt deeply burrowed in the experience of the American workers. Nor were these pre-war unions merely the creations of the official oligarchy. The inner opposition within trade union councils of the Socialist wings and other administration critics all found their expression in the history of the A. F. of L.

Just now there is, for reasons which cannot be briefly stated, a sort of interregnum in the vitality of American labor. It is only fair to the A. F. of L. to point out that the various opposition movements to it are no more effective at the moment than the A. F. of L. itself. But there is little doubt in my mind that when American labor once more becomes conscious its past experiences shall not have been lost. And part of the function of the C. P. L. A. is to reinfuse it with its old vigor, of course in the light of the new conditions. But, speaking for the short run, the present leadership of the A. F. of L. has no labor future, as the word "labor" is understood by the social historian. And this, to my mind, is true, even though now and then it may follow the country at large in advocating some piece of social insurance.

NEW SPIRIT NECESSARY

By Roger N. Baldwin

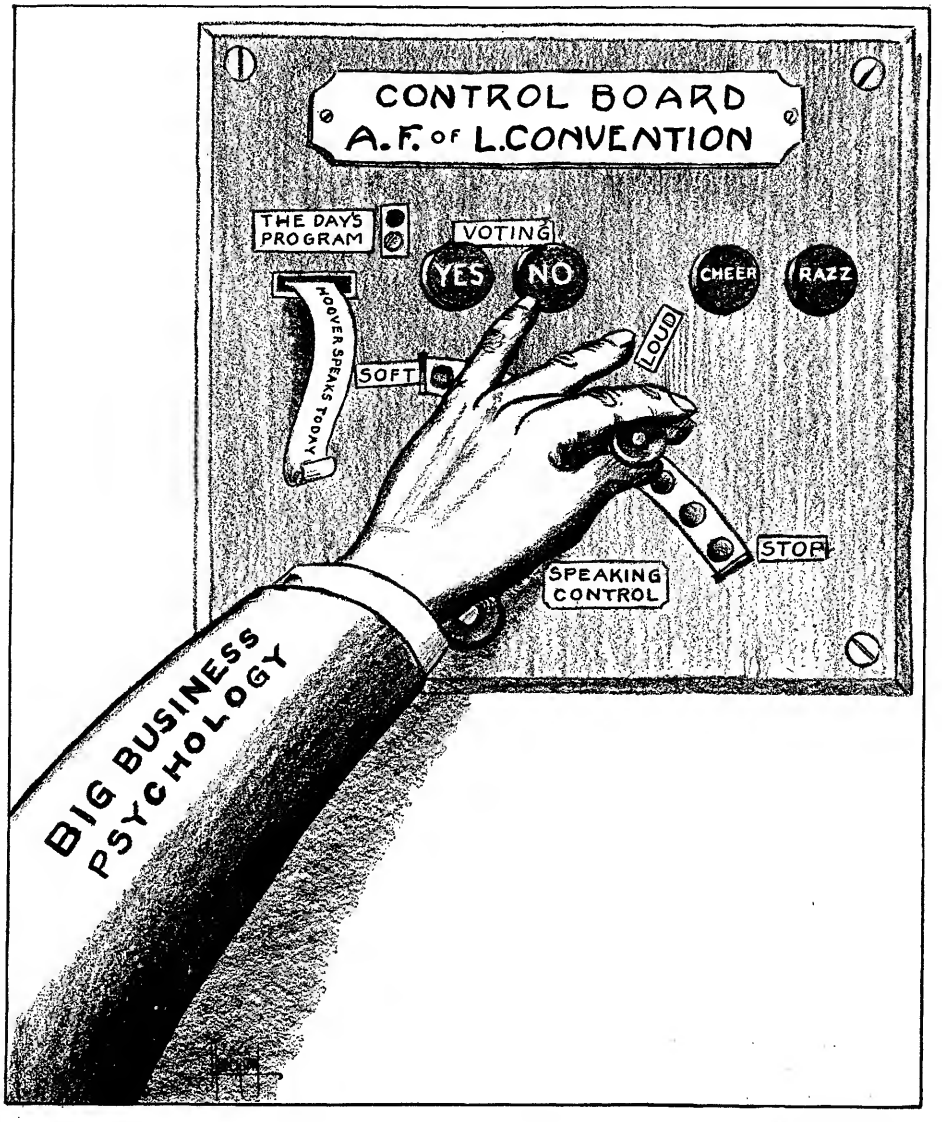
Director, American Civil Liberties Union

SPEAK as a rank outsider who nevertheless believes the organized workers the only power capable of abolishing and supplanting capitalism. And I believe it in the face of the present bankruptcy of the American Labor Movement. That bankruptcy is at bottom, but not wholly, due to the fact that too many workers can still graduate from the American working clas into business. When as in Europe classes become here so fixed that a worker knows he will die in the class in which he is born, we will have a Labor Movement conscious of power and purpose.

Today it cherishes faith in capitalism, nationalism, old party politics and compromise. It has lost its pioneering militancy. It no longer fights even for its own rights. It is respectable, stodgy and timid. Challenged by the new industrialism of the south, it lacks the courage to make good its own professions to organize. Challenged by wholesale denial of labor's rights by

(Continued on page 29)

THE HAND THAT RULES THE CONVENTION



Drawn for Labor Age by Jack Anderson

The A. F. of L., The C. P. L. A. and the Future

By A. J. MUSTE

WHAT is the program of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action? That is a question of special importance on the eve of the opening of the A. F. of L. Convention in Boston, a convention at which that organization is to give special consideration to the near-completion of fifty years of history.

1. *The C. P. L. A. believes that the Labor Movement must again be inspired by a spirit of militancy and enthusiasm.* The dominant idea in organization work today, as we have repeatedly pointed out, is to go to the employer, offer him cooperation in making his industry efficient, persuade him that he has much to gain by unionizing his plant, instead of going to the workers and seeking to persuade them to organize as the only way to gain the material and spiritual goods to which they are entitled. We are not of those who believe that it is the business of labor to wreck industries; nor that labor can be indifferent to matters of efficiency in production. But industry cannot be made efficient when run autocratically and for profit. Witness the misery in which the workers everywhere find themseves today under our vaunted New Capitalism! Furthermore, there is no evidence that this method of persuading employers to unionize works. And such unions as exist under such a regime, by general admission, lack the energy, vitality and effectiveness manifest in the old days.

Militancy—appeal to workers to organize, base your unions on the self-respect and courage of the membership, arouse the workers to a holy crusade for a new world—that is the first plank in our platform. You may say, if you please, that we are conservatives at this point. We want the movement to be more like it used to be.

2. *C. P. L. A. wants to see an inclusive unionism which with missionary zeal goes after the workers*—unskilled and semi-skilled as well as skilled, women and youth as well as men, the Negro as well as the white worker. Only lip-service is paid to that ideal now.

3. *C. P. L. A. stands for industrial unionism.* The structure of the unions must be adapted to the structure of industry today as it was in that period from 1893 to 1904 when the A. F. of L. made such gigantic strides in membership. The craft unions still stand squarely in the way of this forward step.

4. *C. P. L. A. stands for an all-round Labor Movement*—not merely unionism, but unionism plus a labor party, a cooperative movement, labor education, recreation, culture. Shut a trade unionist off from these other fields of labor activity so that he seeks an outlet in church, fraternal order, club, Republican or Democratic politics, etc., and presently his thinking and acting on all important points are determined by these agencies alone, not by his union. You do not have a laborite, nor even a trade unionist. Why the bitter complaint from the A. F. of L. leaders at the lack of interest and devotion in their membership?

5. *C. P. L. A. stands for a nation-wide system of social insurance against the risks of unemployment, sickness and old age.* Having come out at last for old age pensions, the A. F. of L. Executive Council by some amazing inconsistency has entered the lists against state and federal provisions for unemployment insurance—at the behest of Herbert Hoover, perhaps?

6. *C. P. L. A. wants a Labor Party*—independent political action for the workers.

C. P. L. A. Is Anti-Militaristic

7. *C. P. L. A. is definitely and unalterably opposed to militarism and imperialism.* The A. F. of L. is no longer a leader in the movement to abolish war; it hardly takes part in it at all. It becomes very narrowly nationalistic every year. Its leaders help to intensify the world's ills and aggravate its hatreds and suspicions by helping to pass the most iniquitous tariff bill in our history. They are on easy terms with army and navy chiefs. All this at a time when in a dozen centers on the planet war-clouds hang ominously low and when war, if it comes, will be ghastly beyond words and may wipe out civilization completely.

This is the kind of program we are seeking to advance by all sorts of educational efforts among unorganized workers, in the unions and among other groups; by supporting efforts to build labor parties; by sending young men and women into basic industries to prepare the way quietly and cautiously for organization; by trying to bring militant and progressive laborites everywhere together for mutual counsel and encouragement.

But Why Find Fault?

"But," many of our friends say, "why do you have to spoil such a fine program by "attacking" Pres. Green, Matthew Woll and other A. F. of L. leaders? Aye, there is the rub. If only we confined ourselves to working constructively, didn't criticize, would "let the unions alone!"

Now we are prepared to admit that the degree in which the A. F. of L. is responsible for the situation in which the American workers and the American Labor Movement find themselves may be exaggerated. Economic, political, social conditions count for much. The lefts and the centrists in the U. S. haven't much to show for their efforts over a term of years either! Nevertheless, the A. F. of L. has for a good while been, and still is, the dominant labor organization in this country. It cannot escape its share of responsibility.

We are prepared to admit also that it is possible to exaggerate the faults as well as the virtues of leaders, the significance of their role; prepared to admit that we are poor, fallible creatures who make mistakes and sometimes perhaps descend to needless and petty fault-finding. Furthermore, we are not a set of irresponsibles and we know that there are times in a strike or organizing campaign when one shuts his mouth and bides his time, however he may question what is going on.

Most emphatically we believe that in controversy within the Labor Movement it is exceedingly desirable that a measure of toleration and decency be observed.

Nevertheless, we hold that criticism of policies and officials is essential in the Labor Movement and that it is a part of the duty of progressive laborites. We are not in the least apologetic about indulging in it.

There is a vicious and silly notion

abroad that criticism of an official is "attack" on the movement. Tyrants everywhere act on that notion and mete out bloody vengeance to those who do not share it. Well, there have always been rash souls who challenged tyrants, and there are such in the Labor Movement today.

Are Senator Norris and some of his colleagues traitors to the nation because they speak with minds fearlessly even about Herbert Hoover? Whence then this idea that it is treason for the citizens of the trade union movement to register a vigorous kick, even a whole series of them, against William Green's policies?

Even in war-time citizens insist upon a certain degree of freedom to discuss national policies, including the conduct of the war itself. It is, of course, conceivable that a citizen may abuse that right, but it is also conceivable that a government may be unduly nervous or stupid or tyrannous and suppress perfectly legitimate discussion—and every historian and political scientist will tell you that the latter is much more likely to happen than the former. Governments lose their heads in war-time and repent, if at all, at leisure. The same nervousness and temptation to domineer occur in the Labor Movement.

Left and Right Ditches

We are aware, of course, that to some extent the tendency to shut up ruthlessly every dissenting voice and establish a right wing dictatorship and terrorism in the unions is an aftermath of the struggle with the Communists. We, too, have been against much in Communist tactics. But if in order to avoid a ditch on the left side of the road, the movement falls into just as deep and dirty a ditch on the right side. what has been gained?

And how about these noisy critics of Communist dictatorship, these advocates of democracy, who regard every criticism as an act of treason and seek to deal with the critics accordingly? Masterful a personality as Samuel Gompers was, no such rank intolerance existed in his day. An "opposition" lived and flourished and kicked, and the Movement flourished with it!

Every living movement which is for something is necessarily also against something. A movement must differentiate itself from its surroundings if it is to live. That means that it has to criticize. It is impossible to be for industrial unionism, a square deal for the Negro and other unskilled workers, a militant organizing policy, anti-imperialism, a new economic order based on social ownership and workers' control—to be for these things in fact and not merely in word—and be complacent or friendly toward the Green-Woll leadership in the A. F. of L. You have to be their enemy—speaking of course in the political and not the personal sense. You have to be militantly against their policies. Gompers, to cite him again, knew that. Read about his dealings with the Knights of Labor.

The very fact that the moment you criticize certain officials and policies, many people jump a hundred miles in the air is itself evidence that there you have touched the real crux of the problem, that you are doing something which counts and therefore hurts, that you are taking a position which means something. Everybody will speak well of you, or at least leave you alone, as long as you stay away from the essential point and leave the powers that be quite safe in their seats.

In the meantime, we are well aware that criticism comes with the better grace from those who do something else besides, and we have no fear as to the results of any investigation of the "constructive labor activities" of the C. P. L. A.ers.

High Lights of the Boston A. F. of L. Convention

Will Be Presented in the

NOVEMBER LABOR AGE

Also in the same Issue

LIES AGAINST LABOR

An Old Story Ever New

of the Control of the Press in the Interest of Capital

By

EUGENE L. SHOSBERG

●

The November Labor Age

The Future of the A. F. of L.

What, then, is to become of the A. F .of L.? Is it to die, to be wiped out, to be revitalized? We do not think anybody today has a certain answer to that question. Most members of the C. P. L. A. are active members or officers of the A. F. of L. unions. We are against a policy of destroying unions. We are not "dual unionists." It is conceivable that with changing economic conditions and the influx of new blood from the basic industries, the A. F. of L. may be revitalized.

Two points progressive laborites will, however, hold fast. They will inspire and help workers to organize and assist them in conflicts with the bosses regardless of whether they happen in every instance to be in the A. F. of L. The A. F. of L. is a means and not an end in itself, nor a fetish. Are not workers who are on the outside much more likely to come in if they get help rather than opposition or indifference? Secondly, progressives will never again consent to breaking up workers in the basic industries into craft unions. If workers in these industries form industrial unions, let them seek admission to the A. F. of L. Let us have a united movement if possible. If, however, the A. F. of L. excludes such unions or seeks to break them up, these unions will not meekly go out of existence. They will live and lay the foundations for a larger and more effective Labor Movement capable of coping with the New Capitalism.

For a gigantic effort to build such a movement we seek to rally all progressive and militant laborites. In the presence of such a task there is no more dangerous enemy than the would-be progressive or Socialist who cries out with pain every time an A. F. of L. official's toe is stepped on, but who loudly criticizes every attempt on the part of his fellow-progressives or Socialists to do something vigorous —these last must be "knocked" no matter how few errors they make, while union officials must not be admonished no matter how many crimes they commit—who has become cynical, discouraged, timorous, a "tired radical." We call upon the youngsters of all ages, who still have faith, enthusiasm and the nerve to act and make mistakes to rally to the task of building an all-round Labor Movement in this, the stronghold of capitalism and imperialism.

Flashes from the Labor World

Were the American Federation of Labor conventions based on city and state labor bodies instead of international unions, an exciting session might well be expected at Boston. Two conflicting views on the relief of millions of unemployed workers now swamping the job offices and charity bureaus have developed in the official Labor Movement almost overnight. One view is that the distress of the unemployed can be relieved ultimately by raising wages and shortening hours, despite the pressure of the jobless on the market, cutting wages and lengthening the working day. This view is upheld by President Green and the A. F. of L. executive council. The other is that something practicable must be done now to ease the terrific suffering of unemployment. Instead of charity and doles, unemployment insurance is advanced by holders of this viewpoint as the logical way to help the unemployed.

It happens that organizations with well over a third of the A. F. of L. membership have indorsed unemployment insurance. These include the New York, Rhode Island and Utah State federations, the United Hebrew Trades of New York City, the American Federation of Teachers, the Amalgamated Lithographers and doubtless scores of local bodies. Nevertheless, it is extremely doubtful whether the isue will come up on the floor of the convention. This is because international unions in considering unemployment problems think in terms of their own memberships rather than the wider interest of the entire Labor Movement. Some unions such as the Amalgamated Clothing Workers (not in the A. F. of L.) and the Electrical Workers have unemployment funds maintained by the industry and the union. Apparently several years of spade work on the part of progressive unionists will be required before action can be procured from the A. F. of L. A curious commentary on "leadership."

* * *

When you read this **Labor Age** the 4,000 unionized workers of Danville, Va., may be on strike for union recognition in the most important labor struggle of 1930. The local, stung by discharge of its members in the Riverside & Dan River cotton mills and six months of mill persecution, has finally taken the strike vote authorized by the Uuited Textile Workers. A government conciliator will try his hand first at trying to bring headstrong Pres. Fitzgerald of the mills to terms. If that fails, the Labor Movement will be faced by a momentous struggle which will require at least a hundred thousand dollars to wring victory.

Danville is the key point in southern labor strategy today. There the union and the mill have drawn the issue and made preparations to stake the issue of recognition on a straight fight. It must not be denied that the opportunity is favorable to the mill, with industrial depression clogging the cotton cloth markets. But unions unfortunately are not always able to choose the time to fight. Usually the boss does that and nothing is left for the workers but to **rise up.**

This strike will tax the resources of the A. F. of L. to the limit. There is no $5,000,000 defense fund such as the A. F. of L. might have raised for such emergencies were it a fighting organization. There is nothing but the appeals of strikers to the good will of the Labor Movement at large, the sending of delegations to industrial centers to appeal to local unions, and all the expensive and time wasting methods of financing a strike, long foreseen, which characterize the generalship of the official Labor Movement. It means that individuals and organizations in sympathy with the southern workers must dig into their jeans to help tide over the 12,000 workers and dependents directly affected by this biggest strike of 1930.

* * *

Printers meeting in Int'l. Typographical Union convention in Houston decided that the times are not right for the 5-day week by international rule. A New York proposal that the union take another forward step, such as marked 1921 when the 44-hour was adopted for job shops, was deferred and the executive council ordered to give support to those jurisdictions seeking to ameliorate unemployment by the shorter work week. Economic considerations undoubtedly held back the convention. The publishers have put up a strong united front against the 5-day week, the scab printing schools are tumbling graduates out of their doors as never before to compete with union men and the publishers' own scab army is champing at the bit. The convention turned down an assessment proposition to finance a $5,000,000 defense fund because it would add to the already high dues burden of the union. New York delegates criticized the union financial system by which only a tiny fraction of international resources go for organization and strike defense while millions are appropriated for fraternal benefits.

* * *

The crimping system is back on the New York waterfront. Bob LaFollette aimed what he thought was a death blow at the crimps when his seamen's act in 1915 forbade shipping companies to pay over seamen's wages to them. But the old warrior didn't reckon with the insatiable profit motive. Now that thousands of deep sea sailors are clamoring for the few jobs opening up, they are turning to the crimp for nauseating food and lodgings they furnish the man who is down and out. When the seaman gets his job, he must pay the crimp after he returns, and the port ghoul usually gets his, even if he can't force the company to pay the sailor's debt. These foul boarding houses are flourishing in the shadow of Wall St. skyscrapers and along the Brooklyn waterfront, without the least comment from any public authority or daily newspaper.

* * *

In the Illinois mine fields the war of injunctions goes on. The ghastly conflict of rival unions in capitalist courts has reached a climax in a Lewis court order which forbids the Illinois union to use its own name, to collect dues or publish its paper, THE ILLINOIS MINER. This crushing blow has made enormously more difficult the reorganized union's fight against the stubborn, vengeful Lewis. It would not be entirely improbable if the struggle would end in open shoppery. If so, Mr. Lewis would have one more victory to add to his impressive list in losing West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio in the past five years. The union would then be practically wiped out in the soft coal fields.

* * *

Sometimes bosses are so dumb or impotent that they endanger their workers' jobs. It is in such an emergency that the Cigarmakers' Union has come forward with a cooperative buying and selling agency to save the little union cigar bosses from extinction at the hands of the big non-union outfits. Through A. P. Bower, vice-president of the Pennsylvania Federation of Labor and an experienced cooperator, the new organization has swung into activity, buying leaf at the price enjoyed by the big fellows and arranging for cooperative marketing of the little fellows' cigars under one or two union labels, to be well advertised throughout the country.

HARVEY O'CONNOR.

Labor Day Conference

Annual Meet Attracts Increasing Interest — Recreational Features Provide Diversions

IT is too bad that all the readers of LABOR AGE could not have been present at the excellent party which the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, with the cooperation of Brookwood Labor College, staged over the Labor Day week end in this, the second year of the aimless and prosperityless Hooverian period. To say that the facilities of Brookwood, even though its 53 acres open to the sky are taken into consideration were taxed, is to say far too little. Guests overflowed everywhere and after all available space was utilized at the school, a goodly portion of those who arrived had to find quarters in Katonah, the nearby village. This annual gathering is becoming as popular to the progressives as the hegira to Mecca is to the believers of the Mohammedan faith. What will happen in the very near future, as attendance increases year after year, is already becoming a question of great moment. To add to the festal spirit, the weather man left nothing to be desired in the way of cosmic stage properties. Blue sky and dazzling sunshine there were aplenty.

Taking the cue from the surrounding scene, the speakers who participated in the presentation of fact and discussion of problem were as brilliant as glad nature itself. They outdid themselves in rhetoric, scholarship and logic. Unfortunately much of the excellent material must be condensed for lack of space. The more important speeches are published in this issue in full.

Intimately and realistically touching upon the purposes of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, were the reports from those workers who are participating in industry concerning the job problems of the workers and the development of progressive ideas among them. Their stories from the industrial front, where men and women sweat and starve and die, had that vitality of reality with which it is important to interlard any discussion of problems and of trends.

To start with the review of the textile situation, it is probably best to quote from a statement sent to the conference by Francis J. Gorman, Vice President of the United Textile Workers:

"Since the opening of the Southern campaign," Mr. Gorman wrote, "we have established local unions for textile workers in Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama. Danville, Huntsville and Columbia are our largest locals. The depression of course has affected our movement, but in consideration of the circumstances we believe our progress has been good, and we have now built a foundation for stable organization in the South.

"In some parts of the South the employers have fought us bitterly, and are taking full advantage of the depression to nip our movement in the bud before we get a toe hold. A few employers have not interfered. To my mind it will be necessary in the near future to accept the challenge, and select a strategic center to make the fight. One good fight, and a fair settlement would do more to stop the persecuting of the workers for joining the union than any attempt to reason with these men who are desperate and feel their strangle hold becoming weaker."

Thus the attitude assumed at the very outset by the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, that the workers in the textile mills will not be organized by appealing to their bosses, is here vindicated by the man who knows most about the southern situation.

"In Danville," Mr. Gorman's statement continues, "the workers have devoted seven months in building their union, and during this time the employers have gone the limit to destroy the movement. Hundreds of key workers were fired and we found it necessary to establish a relief system for those in need. Today we have approximately 2,500 workers unemployed.

"Only a few days ago the company announced the discontinuance of all welfare work, which takes with it the community house, the Y. M. C. A., the Hylton Hall dormitory, and many other pet schemes of Fitzgerald, including the termination of all insurance policies. . . . The company is forcing the fight and deserves a vote of thanks for assisting us in maintaining the morale of our members."

Mr. Gorman wound up his analysis of the situation by stating that the workers in the South are real trade unionists who will stick by their organization through all difficulties. Though they have suffered tremendously, the "workers have accepted the union with religious fervor. . . ."

Tom Tippett, director of the Extension Department of Brookwood, who spent a large part of his time doing educational work in the South, felt that the Southern workers were the best material for unionism because, "they are already in a state of revolt against intolerable conditions." The difficulty, in his opinion, is to find the right kind of organization activity to fit the peculiar southern conditions.

"The A. F. of L. campaign," he continued, "is one of trade union management cooperation. They have taken the message of trade unionism to the employer and to the public and tried to convince them that trade unions are all right. And in this they have been fairly successful. Green and others have convinced the South that trade unionism is not something dangerous—except when their own workers come to talk about it. The A. F. of L. has spent too much time damning the communists. The A. F. of L. has not gone to the workers themselves, but to state legislatures, chambers of commerce, bankers and business men."

Mr. Tippett pointed to the need for militant methods in order to get the right kind of emotional response from the workers. "The southern workers are sore; they want to hear some one put into words their own dislike for the bosses, their own small grievances." Concluding, the speaker again emphasized the great opportunity there is for organization in the South for the right kind of unionism, built along the lines laid out by the Conference for Progressive Labor Action.

Following Mr. Tippett, a more detailed picture was drawn by Katharine Pollak, who had but the very same day returned from a tour of some of the southern cities where the problem of organization was foremost. Miss Pollak, co-author with Mr. Tippett of "Modern Industry," visited Bessemer City, Danville, Greensboro and other

centers. Everywhere she found employers using every conceivable method to prevent unionization. Welfare schemes, company unions and evictions were the popular means of attempting to keep the workers either satisfied or terrified against the union.

Miss Pollak believed that Danville will be the test of the United Textile Workers and the American Federation of Labor.

"A strike there," she concluded, "would cost money and the U. T. W. would have to be backed up. There, the U. T. W. has as favorable an organization situation as could be expected. They are now discharging workers in the Danville mills because they belong to the union. Will the U. T. W. meet this challenge?"

The big thrill of the session on textiles was reserved when Lawrence Hogan, southern to the core, who was one of the leaders in the Marion strike last year and is today serving his six months on the rock pile for that loyalty to his fellow workers, came to the platform. With strong, fighting chin, a forest of wiry hair that refuses to be influenced by comb and brush, and over six feet of sinews and muscle, he appeared as the living embodiment of aroused labor.

"Southern workers nave already proved their loyalty," he said. "They will stick to a union. But sticking is dependent upon enough to eat and the union must be able to feed these workers.

"When the southern workers heard that the A. F. of L. was coming south to organize, they thought it meant a big campaign and a general strike which they were ready to support. But they were fooled. In Marion today, all the relief workers get is simply charity. There is no union activity there at all."

Incidentally, it may be here related that Lawrence Hogan, representing the C. P. L. A. after graduating from Brookwood, went back to Marion and kept up whatever union activity there was through his educational work among the textile operatives.

Summarizing the situation, at the conclusion of the session, A. J. Muste, chairman of the conference, suggested that the methods pursued by the A. F. of L. in the South were in some ways effective. In the first place, more effort was put into the campaign this time than ever before. Secondly, the idea of trade unionism is no longer regarded down there as an invention of the devil. The strategy of going slow is justified in the short run when the depressed condition of the industry with its consequent unemployment is considered. However, when a long range view of the situation is desired, the present methods are inadequate, he thought.

"Think of Elizabethton and Marion, the tragedy of which is that the workers' defeat there came not as a result of ill will, but because they wanted to organize and didn't know how," Mr. Muste said. "There were 5,000 workers in Elizabethton—not a great number, yet the United Textile Workers could not raise enough money to carry the strike through successfully. A poor settlement was made which resulted in a company union. The same is true of Marion. If Danville comes to a crisis it behooves each one of us to pitch in and help make it a victory and see that the pledge made to those southern workers is redeemed and that they do get a chance to organize.

"If the American Federation of Labor and the United Textile Workers fall down now, it will be tremendously difficult ever again to justify them to the southern workers. And if they don't do the job, then we must," Muste warned.

Steel came in for attention earlier in the evening when several young C. P. L. A.ers who are at present active in the steel industry gave the conference a summary of what they are experiencing. Due to obvious reasons their names will be omitted.

Despite the fact that it is commonly accepted that an eight hour day prevails in the steel industry, the contrary is generally true. The rolling mills, using skilled workers, enjoy the eight hour day, but the majority of workers toil more than eight hours. They contrasted the pay of the steel workers, which in 1929 averaged $1,100 for common labor and $1,900 for the most highly skilled, with the pay of president Eugene Grace, of the Bethlehem Steel Co., who, in addition to his $12,000 salary, received last year a bonus of $1,600,000.

They reported that in most plants 45 years is the average age limit, and those around that age are in constant fear of being laid off. The insurance companies are bringing great pressure to bear to reduce the age limits still lower. Steel employers, like most others, are using more machinery and laying off more and more men. Puddlers used to be the mainstay of the industry, but now even they are being supplanted by machinery. Rolling was another highly skilled operation, but with large scale production methods, it also feels the effects of rationalization.

Under these circumstances, the workers are thinking more about the problems of their industry than for a long time previously, was the conclusion the speakers drew. They are conscious of the fact that something is wrong and are asking questions to discover what that is and how the remedy is to be applied. There is some sentiment for independent political action and the time for educational work is exceptional. They are eager to learn the facts, being puzzled as to a way out of their difficulties. Some of them talk of chucking the whole thing and going to Russia to work.

Part of one session of the conference was devoted to the present facts about coal, with special reference to the possibilities of building up the new miners' union which is opposing John L. Lewis. Tom Tippett, as well versed in coal as he is in textiles, having been a coal miner himself, who later con-

WHERE C. P. L. A.'ERS MET

Main building of Brookwood Labor College at Katonah, N. Y.

ducted educational classes among the miners and now having direct connections with the Howat faction, outlined what to him were the high lights of the conditions there.

Mr. Tippett took the listeners back to the early formation of the United Mine Workers and what a force they developed to be in the course of about thirty years, prior to 1920. Then under Lewis' leadership, as told many times in the pages of LABOR AGE, the membership of the United Mine Workers began to decline until in 1929 it was but a shadow of its former self. Out of this dissatisfaction with the present leadership grew the division into the two organizations, the older one still headed by Lewis and embracing practically the anthracite miners only, and the other headed by Alexander Howat, covering the bituminous section of the coal industry.

Who are these men who are heading the Howat faction and what can be expected from them in the future? asked Tippett.

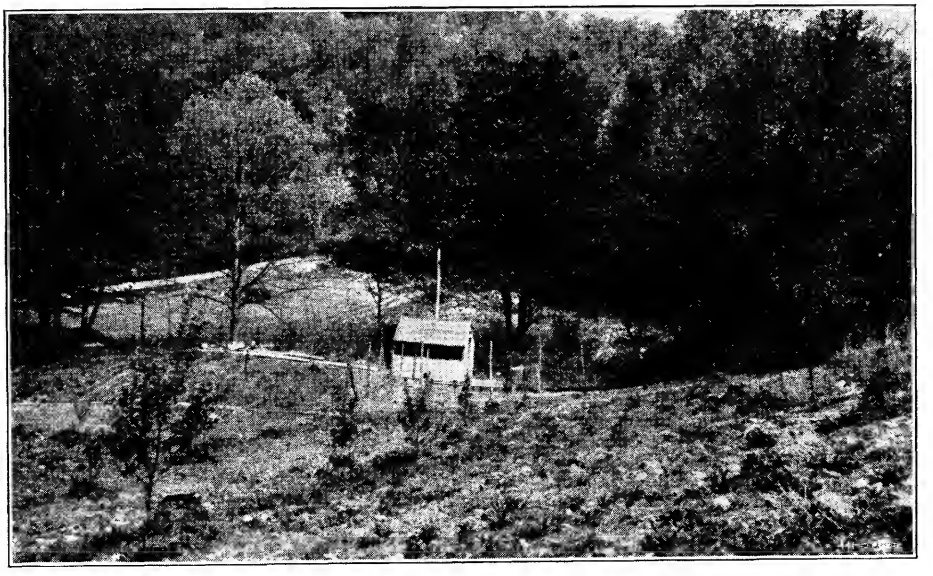
"Alexander Howat," he answered the question," was president of the Kansas District, where he had opposed the industrial court and fought against Lewis. By and large, he is the only man who has retained his radicalism. He was and is by nature a revolutionist. He is a man getting up in the 60's. He has gone along the same road as others but has never become like them. He has always remained a working man, and became very popular with the miners' organization.

"The other personalities are men of the old type. John Walker grew up in the Labor Movement in the miners' union and was president of the Illinois District at one time. During the last decade he has been an officer in the Illinois State Federation of Labor. He was going along with the A. F. of L. on all its policies and was recognized as a regular conservative. He became the secretary of the new miners' organization.

Walker was getting $8,000 a year as president of the Illinois State Federation of Labor when he joined the insurgent forces and accepted the secretaryship of the new union at $5,000 a year. He started to sell the new organization to the miners.'

"The vice president is a different type. Adolph Germer grew up in the miners' union. He became, in his early days, a violent red, joined the Socialist Party and was kicked out of the miners' union. He then functioned as an officer of the Socialist Party. Then, with the passing of time, he left the Socialist Party and went to work as a business man—becoming a realtor in Chicago. He came back to save the miners' union. He was called in to write articles to attack Lewis. There was a Germer following and he was elected to the vice presidency."

IN THE HILLS OF WESTCHESTER COUNTY



Part of Brookwood's 53 acres.

How far the new union could have gone with such leadership, even if unmolested by Lewis opposition and court action, is problematical, the speaker explained. For one thing, the convention was altogether a different thing than the organization that grew out of it. The present officers are unable to sell the new union to the rank and file. In addition, however, the courts came in. Lewis was able to get a court to issue an injunction against the new union which ties them hand and foot and which the Howat organization decided to obey. The result is that with the rank and file not being 100 per cent for the new group; with the courts interfering; with the local operators with much power in their hands and with Lewis far stronger than was at first surmised, the new organization is struggling for life. These facts may compel the new organization to become more radical.

"The situation sums up something like this," the speaker concluded. 'Howat touches the emotions of the mine workers and he is therefore very essential to the new group. But there must be someone to balance Howat. There must be someone there who is an experienced negotiator in order to get contracts with the coal operators. At the same time the other officers are too close to the A. F. of L. pattern to start on effective organization work. The union will therefore have to be radical to overcome the present apathy on the part of the membership, on the one hand, and the opposition of Lewis on the other. The developing trends will be worth watching. The Howat group will appear at the Boston A. F. of L. convention to be recognized. No doubt it will be thrown out. It will then be independent of the A. F. of L. The insurgents will be rebels. Pressure will make them adopt a more militant policy than they wanted to adopt up to now."

A discussion of the developments on the political field, brought out the fact that the only party of any consequence which is today challenging the boss controlled Democratic and Republican parties is the Socialist Party. And until a labor party will be formed, controlled by and working in the interest of organized labor the situation will not be much remedied. This discussion was opened with the reading of a letter from Norman Thomas, the present leader of the American Socialist movement. After expressing his regret at not being able to be present, Mr. Thomas declared:

"My own strong feeling is that under existing circumstances a great deal could be done to remaking the Socialist Party from the inside and outside. It does show life. It is the only party now actually operating along lines which the C. P. L. A. would seem to approve."

Reviewing the possibilities of the

formation of a Labor Party the writer concluded that

"a labor party . . . cannot be formed until there has been a change in a great many labor unions. A practical alternative, therefore, is to work in the Socialist Party and help to build it up against the day of a possible larger movement. . . ."

James Oneal, Editor of the NEW LEADER, the national Socialist weekly, drew from his experience to show how progressives could change opinion within the trade union movement for independent political action.

"I am inclined to think," he said, "that it is important for all who see the opportunity that lies ahead for them so to guide their propaganda, their agitation, their approach to the problem, that we will actually make converts rather than follow the course that has unfortunately been the history of other progressive groups in this country of becoming a sort of pessimistic sect—a sect that because of the character of its approach to the problem, because of the vindictive attitude on the part of some of our propaganda, instead of making converts has actually raised barriers against our propaganda."

Mr. Oneal then proceeded to relate how by working with the union men, volunteering for service at any task and helping along in every way possible, his opinion was soon sought after and he became an influence among the workers. To the end that "we had practically created such a splended progressive sentiment that we accomplished a number of things. We overcame discrimination." And Socialists became officers of that organization, he added. It may be stated in parenthesis that Mr. Oneal was a steel worker and he refers to the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers Union.

"When Socialists were making headway in the unions and were influential in certain unions, like the International Association of Machinists, a large part of those successes were due to intelligent work. Carry on the agitation in the workplaces first," the speaker admonished, "and later on have the sentiment follow into the trade union bodies."

Exception to the Socialist position was taken by Ludwig Lore, Editor of VOLKSZEITUNG, the German radical daily. Sooner or later, he thought, the workers in America will be ready to recognize the need for independent political action but it wouldn't be patterned after the Socialist Party.

"The Socialist Party is an old institution," he said. "It has had a membership of more than 100,000. It lost it after the war on account of splits, partly because of expulsions before that and because of a general tendency."

In Mr. Lore's opinion most of the loss the Socialist Party suffered can be attributed to its reformistic tendency. Because it has tried to please the non-revolutionary class, it lost the support of the radical elements without gaining any substantial support from the liberals. The speaker felt that only a labor party can gather to itself the large masses of workers.

All work and no play makes dullards out of the most keen. So those who attended this conference did not devote all their time to serious discussion of great problems. In between sessions there was ample opportunity for every form of recreation. And most every one present took quick advantage of these features. Tennis matches, baseball games, swimming parties, and even ping-pong afforded the change of pace necessary for tired muscles and brain to get their edge again. Hiking over the surrounding hillsides helped to quiet nerves and regain composure. Camp fire singing of an evening completed the program.

Almost the entire roster of guests shows membership in some organization. Included were the International Ladies' Garment Workers; United Mine Workers of America; American Federation of Teachers; Bookkeepers, Stenographers and Accountants Union; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; International Association of Machinists; Amalgamated Lithographers; Amalgamated Clothing Workers; Federation of Post Office Clerks; Brotherhood of Railway Clerks; Brotherhod of Locomotive Engineers; United Textile Workers; Pocketbook Makers Union; Young Women's Christian Association; League for Industrial Democracy; Socialist Party; Church League for Industrial Democracy; Young People's Socialist League; National Child Labor Committee; Fellowship of Reconciliation; Bronx Free Fellowship, and others.

It was a great conference. It was a worthwhile conference for it showed not only trends, but the effective work of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action.

Our Unemployment Insurance Bills

Reply to William Green

The detailed features of two bills on unemployment insurance, one designed for introduction in the various state legislatures, and the other in the Federal Congress, have been made public by the national Executive Committee of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action. These measures, after consultation with expert legislative draftsmen, will be put into the form of model bills for the guidance of labor and liberal groups who may be planning the introduction of unemployment insurance legislation in their respective stages during the coming year. The features to be incorporated in the bill for presentation in state legislatures follow:

1. Unemployment insurance is to be a charge on industry in the same way as workmen's compensation for accidents. This is simply carrying further a principle which has been already recognized in labor legislation in America. Furthermore, if it is legitimate that a business should accumulate a reserve in good times so as to be able to pay dividends in periods of depression, it is surely equally legitimate that industry should accumulate reserves to tide over unemployed workers during slack times. Therefore, we advocate contributions by employers alone, and not the tri-partite arrangement of contributions from employer, employe and the state, which is common in European schemes.

2. We advocate the principle of graduated contributions, industries and establishments having more unemployment to pay a higher percentage of their payrolls into the fund. It is hoped in this way to encourage stabilization of industry and employment for the less unemployment an industry will have the less it will have to pay in premiums. Detailed application of the principle is, of course, to be placed in the hands of the agency administering the fund.

3. Unemployed workers are to receive 40 per cent of their prevailing weekly wage with 10 per cent additional

for a wife and 5 per cent for each child up to two, that is, in no case, more than a total of 60 per cent of the prevailing weekly wage of the unemployed worker. Insurance is to be paid for not more than 26 weeks in each year. A worker on short time not making 40 per cent of his prevailing weekly wage is to be paid the difference between what he receives in his pay envelope and 40 per cent of his weekly wage. In no case is a worker to receive in any one year more than the equivalent of 40 per cent of his weekly wages for 26 weeks, or 60 per cent if there are a wife and children.

4. Any one who has worked and for whom contributions have been made in the state for a period of 52 weeks (not necessarily consecutive) is entitled to insurance. Workers receiving insurance may refuse to take jobs where a strike is in progress, jobs at a distance from the locality in which they reside, jobs not paying the prevailing rate of wages or outside of their accustomed occupation. The waiting period before the payments begin is to be one week.

5. The administration of the fund is to be in the hands of a Bureau of the State Department of Labor assisted by an advisory board of two employers, two representatives of organized labor and one of the public, said board to be appointed by the governor.

The C. P. L. A., in addition to this bill for unemployment insurance provided by states, favors a federal bill carrying an initial appropriation of 100 million dollars for the creation of a fund from which the Federal Department of Labor may pay annually to any state establishing a satisfactory unemployment insurance scheme the equivalent of 33 1-3 per cent of what the state fund expends for this object.

While some of the contentions of President Green of the American Federation of Labor are fundamentally sound, and the Conference for Progressive Labor Action agrees with some of the criticisms of unemployment insurance systems in Europe, the American Federation of Labor will place itself squarely in the way of social progress if at the forthcoming Boston convention it opposes the movement for unemployment insurance through governmental agencies, and it will be playing directly into the hands of company unions and open shop employers.

The principle of an annual wage for workers is sound. If it is right for industry to lay by reserves in order to pay dividends on capital in slack times the same kind of provision ought to be made for the workers who invest life, blood and brains in industry. But how practically are workers to be assured of a year around income? In a few cases a corporation covering a part of an industry stabilizes its activities and puts men on the payroll the year around. With only 10 per cent of the workers organized in trade unions, however, the percentage who could be cared for under such a scheme by agreement between union and management is obviously very small.

No matter what may be done by management towards stabilization all economists of any consequence are agreed that in the best of times there are certain to be one and a half million unemployed, not to speak of recurrent crises as at present when many millions are on the street or on short time. How is an annual wage to be provided for these people? There is no way except by unemployment insurance made universal in its application, and, therefore, involving governmental arrangements.

To leave the matter, as Mr. Green suggests, "to a system of voluntary payments worked out by joint agreement with employers" would, first, leave millions unprotected. If employers can be persuaded voluntarily to do the right thing by workers, why have unions at all?

Secondly, in most instances where agreements are made it will be under some sort of company union or employee representation plan, thus establishing another welfare scheme which is of the very essence of that paternalism which Mr. Green wishes to avoid and which acts as a bulwark against the introduction of bona fide unionism in industry. By what logic is unemployment insurance paternalistic and a dole, when it is administered by the state and not when it is run by an open shop employer?

The argument that American workers resent the idea of being compelled to make a fixed contribution to a fund, in so far as it is sound, is met by the Conference for Progressive Labor Action's unemployment insurance bill, which provides that it should be a charge on industry and that the employer alone should pay. The A. F. of L. itself stands for that principle in the case of workmen's compensation and old age pensions—all controlled by governmental administration.

In this connection we wish to point out that the fact that Mr. Green addresses his appeal to employers and warns them against being "stampeded into favoring compulsory unemployment insurance" and seeks to rally them against this measure is a vicious approach to the whole matter and characteristic of recent A. F. of L. policy. Always the assumption has come to be that management of industry is wholly in the employers' hands. Always it is the employer who is implored to act and by implication it is the capitalist employer's position which is strengthened. What is really needed in a period when widespread poverty and unemployment proclaim that capitalist industry has suffered another of its periodic breakdowns is not another appeal to the goodwill and sanity of the men and the forces which brought the war upon us in 1914 and the great depression in 1929, but instead, an appeal to workers to organize and to gain an increasing measure of control over industry.

CREATING SECURITY FOR WORKERS

N. Y. World

Unemployment Insurance will make it possible for industry to store up during the fat years for protection of the workers during the lean.

In Other Lands

GERMANY.

Rumblings and alarms run riot in Germany. That phlegmatic people are sending cold shivers down the backs of conservative Europe and America and all quite unintentionally — the Reich had a regular and constitutional general election. Two months ago we predicted the parties to the extreme right and left would gain but not enough to disturb seriously the Centre. Paradoxical as it sounds the danger is not from the extremists, who are safely in the minority, but from the large number of small parties, principally the particularists and parochial groups. The latter do not want to be welded into a solid parliamentary group so that the government could carry on and they don't want to ally with the right or left. Hence their futility and uselessness. They are neither good at opposition and they are ineffective as administrationists.

Thirty-five millions voted. The Communists and the Fascisti proportionately made the largest gains. The former owe their growth to unemployment which is most serious in the inland cities; the latter to the superb organization created by the Hitler group and the financial and industrial chiefs who control newspaper chains and other powerful means of reaching the public. The economic background is the grinding taxation to pay the reparation bills. The middle class and the professional people who had their savings and bonded investments wiped out or reduced to almost nothing by the deflation of the mark gave the Fascist party and the Communists their support. The Socialists lost nine seats but remain the largest party in the Reichstag. The Bruening or government forces lost heavily. Even the ultra-nationalists, led by Hugenberg, made substantial gains. And should Hugenberg combine with the Austrian born Hitler, the National-Fascist would be formidable. Still there is no need for all the alarming speculation, dire predictions and inferences that the Republic is in danger, for it is not. The extremists nullify each other. The Fascist groups have a hodge-podge of a platform made up of the planks of both the old Fascist group and the Social-Democrats. It is as if the Old Guard Republicans of this country and the Foster Communists combined their platitudes and their suffrages. A fantastic possibility and a madman's dream such as might be concocted and brewed on another Macbethian Heath by a group of political witches. Hitler's Austrian aurora borealis blaze will not blend with Hugenberg's monarchial midnight fires and neither will fuse with the red torches of the Communists.

GERMAN FASCIST CHIEF

ADOLF HITLER
Caricature of the would-be dictator, by T. T. Heine.

What will happen is that Chancellor Bruening will have to admit more Social-Democrats to his cabinet and accept their social reform measures. Mueller will have to surrender his leadership, at least the substance of it, to Otto Bauer who is more realistic and more aggressive. Anything else means a surrender to the Hitlerites, a dictatorship of the industrial overlords of the Rhine and of the coast cities and a repudiation of the Young Plan. But this is not likely, for it would mean cutting the Reich off from the fluid money markets of the world.

It may be good for Germany in that the elections show the drift of opinion in the country as a whole. It will mean the end of temporizing and dodging. Social and industrial questions must be tackled and bad situations remedied. The unemployed must be given larger allowances and work must be found for the workless as at present the Communists find their most fruitful propaganda field among them. The Social-Democrats must perform as well as preach. If they don't, they will be pushed out of the way.

It is in the international plan the greatest excitement obtains and it is there the elections with the gains of the Right and Left cause the most alarm. French chauvinists are already unfolding the gloom clouds. The militarists are warning and hysterically shouting "Prepare." Finance, always nervous, is scared and the big money chiefs are sending notes to Berlin saying, "Lookout, or you will be cut off." The reaction outside Germany is nervous and it means that Conservatives in Poland, France, Britain and the U. S. A. will rattle their sabres. Seventy-six Communist votes in the Reichstag may not be unhealthy though it is far from a dictatorship of the party or the proletariat. German visitors and delegates in New York to the International Jurists Conference say there is ground for slight worry but no reason to be seriously alarmed. It will, one of them said to this writer, take more acute depression, which is world-wide, and more agitation before there is even a sign of revolution and dictatorship. As the alarm clouds roll by one feels the visiting spokesman was correct. The only sinister sign in the elections is the anti-Semitic threats of the Chauvinists and Fascists. Any serious Semitic outrages in Germany would be reflected in Poland, Rumania and other Central Europe reactionary plague spots.

GREAT BRITAIN.

The oft predicted alliance between the Lloyd George Liberals and the Labor Party center and right has almost come to a head. MacDonald and George actually sat in a conference with other Liberal and Labor chiefs a little more than a week ago. It is true it was on unemployment and measures for its relief the confrerees met but that never-theless means a parting of the ways with the Left and Socialist groups. MacDonald's pre-election speeches on unemployment are now plaguing him. Acceptance of offices without a parliamentary majority as distinct from an electoral plurality is the cause of MacDonald's trouble. He was warned four years ago by the Socialists and they tried to prevent his taking office by a resolution in the annual conference at Liverpool. The Premier, Snowden, Henderson and Thomas, heedless of all past experience, preferred honors and place to principle and deferred but real power, opposed the resolution and because of some foolish antics on the part of the Communists early in the day were able

(Continued on page 29)

"Say It With Books"

Prince of Finance

Morgan, The Magnificent, by John K. Winkler. Vanguard Press, $3.50.

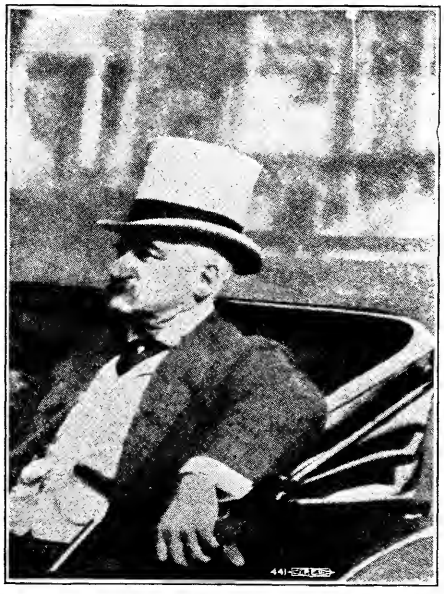
THE concentrated scorn which Mr. Winkler could have summoned to his aid in properly assessing "Morgan, the Magnificent" must have petered out long before he had finished collecting material for this assignment. For though the title of the book holds out promise of ironic treatment of the subject, you find before you have read a page that Mr. Winkler is an adoring biographer. Back in 1908 when the elder Morgan was still alive, a blubbering Boswell in "Pearson's Magazine," proclaimed Morgan magnificent. Morgan liked that, for there was in it the echo of a prince of the *Renaissance.*

And such is the approach of our biographer. Not that he passes over in discreet silence what perhaps the Morgans now living would like him to. Mr. Winkler throws in the necessary dash of paprika. This captain of finance, we learn, was a very young fellow. Nothing woman was to him alien. In fact, it was he who caused to be built the great institution, that marble monument to afterthought, the Lying-In Hospital.

Listen to the awe-struck biographer pursue his romantic way. Winkler might do worse than write the scenario for George Bancroft's next picture. "His stride was elemental, jungle-like. To those who came before him, he seemed a citadel of silence and reserve force, cold, impressive, brusque, tramping forward, always making his visitor uncover his batteries first. He seemed as impregnable as a force of nature. His mental power as well as his physical resources were the marvel of those who watched him. His mind seemed ever on a distant purpose which he alone perceived. It was Bismarck's way. It was Napoleon's way." Also Tara-ra-boom-de-ay.

Morgan's career is detailed to us, with no apparent explanation of the significance of his activity to the great masses of workers in the United States and England. Rather naively, Mr. Winkler states, "he refused to place himself in touch with the social currents that were influencing his time." But it was not important for Morgan to do that. He himself was the creator of the current. What that current swept along, we gain from Mr. Winkler, was the wreckage of other financial careers less fortunately placed to precipitate an equal rush of power. Wherever two strong currents met, they merged.

RIDING IN STATE



Gustavus Myers' "History of Great American Fortunes"

JOHN P. MORGAN
In the heyday of his glory.

It was Morgan who ushered in the first billion dollar trust, the United States Steel Corporation. Aided by that pious little Methodist, Judge Elbert H. Gary, president of the Federal Steel Company, Morgan swung the gigantic deal, at which, quoting Max Lerner, "economists were dazed and village philosophers viewed with alarm." His relations with Gary were nearly tender. After the merger, Gary's disillusionment was great. Winkler relates humorlessly that "Gary soon found that he was in a den of thieves. These fellows played the game heartlessly. He had to lecture them even upon primary ethics. When Gary came to New York he believed that the charges of immoralities and irregularities against Big Business were the mere mouthings of irresponsible demagogues. Sadly, through actual experience, he came to recognize that many of the men who controlled Big Business possessed the morality of alley cats. Was Pierpont Morgan also a crook? Gary could not believe it." Winkler goes on and on.

Not a word do we hear of the conditions of the steel workers, of the seventy-hour work-week, of the blast-furnaces that made steel mills into slaughter-houses of men. Nothing from the biographer about the ultimate sources from which the moral Mr. Gary and the Episcopalian Mr. Morgan derived their tremendous profits. A knowledge of the Pittsburgh Survey conducted by the Russell Sage Foundation might have stopped the author short in his romantic flight. He might have read more closely that part of Myers "History of Great American Fortunes."

He goes on to talk of the titantic encounter of Roosevelt and Morgan. While Teddy flashed his teeth and clenched his jaws, and tried to bust the trust, Morgan grunted like the elephant hurt by the nightingale. In 1904, Republican Roosevelt ran to Wall Street to get campaign funds. In 1907, during the panic out of which Morgan came hot footing it from a church conference to be the Savior of the nation, Roosevelt's Secretary of the Treasury sat in the sub-treasury while across the way Morgan issued his decrees.

Panics were the staff of life for Morgan. He was born in the panic year of 1837. In 1857, just back from Gottingen University, he sat back, and could only observe the catastrophe of the year. But in every panic after that, Morgan participated. In 1895, the Democrat Cleveland had found Morgan anxious to be the boy at the dike. He lent his big fist of gold to the government, and collected $18,000,000 for services to his country.

With emperors and popes, he con-

sorted. He dined alone with the Kaiser. What did he think of Socialism, asked Wilhelm. "I never bother about such theories," said the philosophically alert financier. When he had an audience with Pius X, he was embarrassed. But so was the pope! As Pontifex, so, to quote Winkler, "Pierpontifex!"

Mr. Winkler's book has a few interesting stories which the reader might not know about. Mr. Winkler, however, fails to make the important social observations from a biographic subject of such great social significance. For him Morgan's life is the projection of a strong will into the material world. That makes the subject worthy of a biography. But how that material world was changed, he gives us no more than superficial indications.

Perhaps we are demanding more of the author than he intended to give, and in his own mind he may not fall short of the appointed task. In any event, his book, interesting as it is, is not of much vital use to workers and students in the Labor Movement. Winkler drew a portrait of Rockefeller in oils, he might have etched one of Morgan in acid.

JOHN HERLING.

WHY BRING THIS ON?

The Personal Relation in Industry—A collection of speeches made by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Albert & Charles Boni, New York, N. Y. Paper 50 cents.

WHY the publishers at this time chose to reissue such a collection of vapid hokum is hard to determine, unless they figured that the name of Rockefeller would push the sales regardless of the contents of the volume. The first edition was printed in 1923.

The theme, developed through four addresses and one previously printed article, none later than 1919, winds its repititious way around the now threadbare capital-and-labor-partnership theory, invented by Mackenzie King with the well-remembered "representation plan" forced on the miners in Colorado and expanded upon and polished by that famous ghost writer, Ivy Lee. While Mr. Rockefeller waxes warm about this plan as introduced by the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company in 1915, not a word is said of the findings of both the Federal Council of Churches and the Russell Sage Foundation, who after investigation, declared in 1925 that plan to be the same sort of fake that characterizes most other company union plans.

The style drips with the oil of holy unction, as exemplified in this passage:

"Like knowledge of the problem of sex, than which no department of life is more sacred, vital or deserving of full and ennobling instruction."

Nevertheless, there is sardonic humor in that speech where Mr. Rockefeller, Jr., talks to the gaunt coal miners and tells them the investor has not received a cent in return for the money put into this company in order that "you men might work and get your wages and salaries."

We wonder whether Mr. Rockefeller, while expressing such unselfish devotion, saw the charred skeletons of the 100 odd women and children burned to death by his own henchmen just three winters before, and whether he heard their agonizing screams as the flames licked their bodies!

But, why go on? Any one who can repeat such universally accepted nonsense, as: "Surely the nations which have shown themselves capable of such lofty sacrifice, which have given themselves so freely, gladly, unreservedly, during these past years of struggle, will bring to bear in the solution of this great problem (capital and labor), powers of head and heart, no less wise and unselfish than those exhibited in dealing with the problems of the war;" can make himself believe anything.

The readers can spend their fifty cents to far greater advantage seeing the Marx Brothers in "Animal Crackers."

ISRAEL MUFSON.

LABOR PREACHES TO THE CHURCH

Labor Speaks for Itself on Religion; A Symposium. Edited by Jerome Davis. The Macmillan Company, New York. $2.

IN presenting the views of thirty-two labor leaders of eleven countries upon the subject of labor and religion, Jerome Davis not only gives the varied views and attitudes held by the more important labor groups, but also makes the publication of the symposium a step toward the better understanding he seeks to bring about. He intends to start and invites correspondence on "a Religion and Labor Bureau which shall be non-denominational and non-sectarian, and which will include both church and labor leaders on its board." Since the circulation of the volume is to be largely in the United States and owing to the difficulty of securing the contribution of labor leaders abroad, the articles by American writers are relatively more numerous.

Although the views of contributors vary widely, a sincerity and devotion to the cause of labor holds the writers quite as firmly as religious enthusiasts are gripped by their faith. "In the sense of a growing and expanding life for all men," writes J. B. S. Hardman, "labor is itself a religion. The religion of labor is godless, for it seeks to restore the divinity of man."

In making this observation upon the religious fervor of labor one might continue to draw parallels between characteristic types. Any one accustomed to the emotional atmosphere of a camp-meeting feels quite the same sense of immanence in a meeting led by James P. Thompson of the I. W. W. The advent of his preaching is not for the theologically righteous, but for the economically orthodox. He writes, "The scales are falling from their (the wage working class) eyes, and—glory of glories—they are becoming revolutionary! The coming of the proletariat is the coming of the world's saviours. Their triumph will mean the end of the world's class struggle . . . and we are determined to drive all of you (of the old order) from your throne" (p. 61). As a revivalist, Arthur O. Wharton calls the church to repentance under the title, "What the Church Needs to be Saved," concluding, "It is the general opinion that the church can restore confidence and win the respect and wholehearted support of labor whenever it unselfishly determines that the interests of labor are the interests of the church."

While some contributors make a complete identification of religion with its institutional expression in the church, there are a number who make a distinction, in particular between the carpenter of Nazareth and the theological Christ. Probably the finest examples of those who have learned to distinguish between religion and the church will be found in those ministers such as James Woodsworth of the Canadian Labor Party, and A. J. Muste of Brookwood Labor College, (Norman Thomas, though not a contributor, belongs to this class) who left the church differing with its attitude toward the late war, and found in the Labor Movement a cause closer to the essential spirit of their religion than they had experienced in the organized church.

While the greatest usefullness of the book may be in interpreting labor to religionists, labor readers will profit from understanding the diversity of views found in their own circles. Whether they take the position of their Russian comrades in desiring to wipe out religion entirely, or with President Green of the A. F. of L. that the "American Labor Movement believes in religion and in the church" (p. 108), the readers will understand better the grounds upon which the causes of labor and religion meet.

FRANK C. FOSTER.

WHAT OUR READERS THINK

LABOR AGE *assumes no responsibility for any opinions expressed in this section. They are the personal views of the contributors.*

DISAGREES ON RUSSIA

Dear Editor:

At the outset, let me state that I have no admiration for Matthew Woll or his wild swings at Russia because it is "Red." But, he is not the subject of this discussion.

It amuses, and pains me, when people with some measure of intelligence feel qualified as authorities on Russia after they make a trip thereto. Back they come, all "het up" about the great experiment. They begin to relate stories of the wonders that the Russian Bolsheviks are doing for the workers. They tell you of how the condition of the Russian worker is almost a few steps from Utopia. They wonder at the ability of a country in Russia's position to build up such marvelous factories and industrial projects. They marvel at the size of the trade union membership. They rave about the progress of social legislation in Russia. O'Connor in his article in the September Labor Age, goes them one better and even gloats over Russia's "industrial democracy." Then, to cap it all the "proud boast" is put forth, that "now in a time of world-wide depression she is the **only** 'white spot' on the black map of hard times." Now isn't that a pretty picture? Of course it is, but is it a fact? What are the facts?

I am afraid that it will have to take Harvey O'Connor a few more trips to Russia, with a few months of living in some Russian homes and working in some Russian factories, mill or farm before he will begin to realize what has happened in Russia these eleven years.

I like that reference to the reports of "American economists, engineers, union officers and *rank and filers*." It makes one feel so sure that Russia is a "holy land" for workers that one wants to take the next plane across the Atlantic so as to get to Russia before anything happens to remove that bliss. Did our friend stop to think that these very same "experts" have been visitors guided around like he was? There is one type of report that I have any faith in, and that is the kind of report that one gets from people who have lived there all their lives and have nothing to gain or lose from telling what is happening in Russia. I have had the opportunity, countless times, to learn of the conditions of Russian workers, in this simple manner. It so happens that my family, and friends of my family are living in many parts of Russia. For dozens of generations they have consisted only of workers. When Russia came under Communist rule they were not among "the counter-revolutionists." Such people, I hope, can be expected to tell the truth, and at the same time be expected to know at least as much of Russia as any visitor guided around to the "show rooms" of Russia's Communism.

From what I gather from my relatives, O'Connor has made some "slight exaggerations." First and foremost is the claim that "Industrial democracy is real." What utter bosh! Why even the Communists themselves evade that question as best as they can. What sort of "Industrial Democracy" is it that makes every worker fear to open his mouth against prevailing conditions in Russia, and that maintains one of the most horrible spy systems that mankind has yet heard of? What sort of democracy is it that makes children betray their fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers to firing squads or Siberia. If you think that I am exaggerating, then investigate the tales of children being OGPU members and keeping tab on the activities of their parents.

One question that Communists fail to answer is: "Why must a land like Russia, with all its industrial development, feed its people like "Bowery bums"? The average worker in Russia is dressed in rags (if he at least has them), and feeds on black bread and worm-ridden meat. Can they deny that? Can they tell us how it is that workers who are receiving the benefits of high wages and social insurance must live the lives of beggars? O'Connor quotes a wage-scale that is supposed to be one that Russian workers are paid by. It looks quite good to me. But still, I wonder, whether the sight of lines in front of bakery and butcher shops (if the guides permitted him to see them) made him wonder why such "highly paid" workers had to stand on line for food, because it had to be rationed out to them?

Did O'Connor stop to think why it is that the Russian trade unions have the largest membership in the world in proportion to the working population? No. Well, if he would re-read his own article he would find the answer. Here it is: "Special concessions are made to unionists; they get food cheaper, rebates at theatres, preferential treatment in cooperatives." Now, isn't it logical that a worker would want to get such concessions if they would only save him the horrors of the breadline? Of course he would. Is that the only reason why he joins? Not at all. He will starve if he doesn't. If he disagrees with the policies of his union, then he must shut his mouth and join,—or he will starve. He cannot work unless he is a union man. If he is a member he must shut his mouth and bow his head to the will of those in control. If he is "crazy" enough to still have the illusion that human beings have certain rights of freedom of action and speech, and he says so out loud—then that's the end of him. No, my friends, the Russian trade union membership is not large because of the idealism of the masses, but because of the greater urge to eat and live.

In conclusion, let me emphasize that I, as a Socialist, want to see anything succeed, that will advance the cause of Socialism. But, when the mask of Socialism is put over the face of tyranny and oppression, then I am violently against any such anti-social act. When men and women have no freedom of thought and action, when they toil and then starve—then I simply cannot call such workers free. Even if there are no bars to keep these workers in one little cell, they are as free as a mouse in a trap.

HARRY LOPATIN.

DEMOCRACY WILL WIN

Dear Editor:

Let me express my gratitude for the lesson I got out of the September number of your magazine, especially out of the article: Is Labor Free In Russia?" You see, I have been naive enough to think that the fundamental principles of Socialism and its tactics are the same with just small variations all over the world. And the only extreme division exists between the Socialists and Bolsheviks. In other words, I thought that Socialism must be international and not only on paper, but in practice. But since I came to this country and started to get acquainted with the profound, self-satisfactory prosperity psychology, its individualism and its wise Monroe doctrine of the politically ambitious, I noticed that also American Socialism possesses the same blue-blood, charming, superior qualifications. And internationalism is just an illustrious phrase left from the days long gone by. Now we are already a grown-up people, with a 100 per cent labor government at our side. Well, those Bolsheviks have nothing to do here in America because no 100 per cent American would take orders from Moscow. But the psychology of the Bolsheviks and some American Socialists are the same.

However, it is no use to go into further discussion. What I want to say is just this. No matter how selfish, stupid, ignorant and treacherous your information about Russian "experiments" and

Russian Social-Democrats will be; no matter how murderous and hideous your bloody friends of Kremlin will continue to be, it is democratic Socialism what will win, if it will win at all. And not only in your America, where you respect yourself as human beings, but in that far away Russia where, according to your respectful beliefs, the people are just "mujiks" and are just good to be used instead of rabbits, clay and rats for "great experiments," for the good of the world. My, and supposed to be your, comrades are not starving in vain in those "free prisons and camps."

M. WEINSTEIN,
New York, N. Y.

REFLECTIONS OF A MINER

Dear Editor:

Last week I did what I was always warned not to do, namely, reading long hours while lying in bed. I just had to finish "An American Tragedy," and so read all night through; it was almost five o'clock when I laid the book, which is a very serious criticism of our "civilization," away. Yes, the older generation, or their experiences did not teach the younger anything for the end could be the beginning. Theodore Dreiser does picture only the dark sides of life, but are there not ten times as many dark sides as pleasant ones? I am a pessimist, and what keeps me going is not so much my love for the oppressed, but my hate for those who killed Sacco and Vanzetti. I will always stay a revolutionary. My nature is somewhat peculiar. I prefer to read obituaries, rather than jokes. For instance, the description of the death of a Comrade in the Volkszeitung, I read over and over again. I like the solemn wording, and it almost makes me cry. A good Socialist gone, and so many son-of-a-guns stay alive. Or I read one of the many short notices in the daily press (local) which are as follows: "Frank Barlach, 21, was instantly killed beneath a fall of rock in the Loomis Colliery of the Glenn Alden Coal Co. Barlach a few days ago came from Detroit, and today was his first day in the mine." An item like that makes you think of many things. Unemployment in Detroit; such a young fellow; safety laws which are violated daily; and where did he go to?—as I am an agnostic (I used to call myself an atheist) and do not believe in a heaven.

FRED, Luzerne, Pa.

A PUZZLED UNIONIST

Dear Editor:

I have before me your article in the September issue of LABOR AGE, "Who Shall Organize—and How?" I don't know where the answer is to come from. I am a green-horn in the movement, having joined the union of my trade in 1926. But since then I have given it, if not intelligent thought, at least as much hard thought as any. In fact, I am what some are pleased to call a union fanatic. In my union there were two main trends of thought. One was, do something that may attract the workers. This policy was branded disastrous by the other school whose policy was, let the workers come and stay a while before anything is attempted.

The show-something group seceded and went to the dogs. The wait awhile group closed its doors Saturday, August 30, 1930.

In the employment agencies and in the places I work, I have approached thousands and thouands of men and I have almost come to the conclusion that it is impossible to organize. I have come to another conclusion: You go wrong in advocating the industrial union. It may be sound and may work in a higher and more perfect degree of organization but now the more skilled workers don't want to have anything to do with the lower grades of "shoemakers." These "shoemakers" are jealous and suspicious of the "aristocrats." So you will have to do the best you can with the crafts and drop the industrial union from your mind and programs.

Tired of fighting for the union label without results in the cigar stores I began to sound them with the matter of a union for themselves. I was surprised to find in a considerable number of cases that they were receptive. If there were anybody with brains enough to do it, they say, what a strong union it would be. They work very long hours, about 72, for very low wages, $28, $30 and $35 a week for those with many years of service.

C. M., New York, N. Y.

STATE VS. PRIVATE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Dear Editor:

Unemployment insurance, whether maintained jointly by employers and workers or by employers alone, serves in the end to enslave the workers to those who are entrusted with its distribution, and, when this is done by union officials, as in the case in the men's clothing industry, the workers become conservative and submissive in order to find favor in the eyes of the officials who distribute the insurance as they see fit.

Much is being said about the unemployment insurance in this industry. But those who seek publicity and urge its adoption in other industries to relieve unemployment do not give out the particulars as to how the insurance is being distributed. Nor do they tell the general public the specific amounts paid to each respective worker. If these facts were known it would show that this scheme does not help the unemployed but makes this organization more reactionary. That is exactly what this insurance in the clothing industry has done. This is the reason why "the most radical labor union" no longer deserves that distinction. The scheme has subjected each worker to the mercy of the officials in order to get insurance benefits. I trust that this charge will not pass unchallenged. I have evidence to prove that only those get insurance who are practical enough to be in harmony with the wishes and policies of those who have the power to give, directly or indirectly. And this in spite of the fact that every worker contributes to the insurance fund.

But even if these defects in the distribution of insurance will be eliminated, there is no assurance that it will help because of its limitations in providing for sufficient funds to be of much help. Perhaps the only insurance that would provide such relief is state insurance as advocated by the Conference for Progressive Labor Action.

L. KIRSHBAUM. New York.

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WILL BRITISH LABOR TAKE THE IMPERIALIST ROAD?

London—Comparing the Trades Union Congress this year with those of 1924 and earlier, one notices a decrease in the militancy. Delegates, however, who were at the Congress in the most recent years, said that a better reception was given to the leftwing speeches. The Government was warned that the unions expected to have their pre-1926 position restored in the next session of Parliament. A great reception was given to Shiva Rao from Madras after he had shown how the Indian government hampered the trade unions.

The high spots of interest were the debates on Empire policy and family allowances. Bevin was the outstanding figure of the Congress and he championed the momentous report of the General Council which proposed that a survey be made concerning the possibility of developing reciprocal trade within the British Empire. He disowned any Imperialistic weakness and tried to suggest there must be control over raw materials to prevent resort to war. Britain must have bargaining counters in a field of blocs. To be merely anti-tariff was no solution. World federation must be the final aim but Socialists had passed from the agitational stage and must apply their minds to the actual situation. There must be an organization within the confines of the British Empire to prevent the exploitation of the backward races, and distribute raw materials fairly.

The opposition said that there had been too little exploration of the proposal; that the proposal cut across Labor internationalism; was dangerous to world peace; that the Empire was not a geographic or an economic unit and not self-sufficing in markets; that 60 per cent of British goods was made for export and so made her vulnerable to reprisals; that the only protection of the workers' standards was international organization.

Bevin carried the majority of the Congress and so goodbye to the possibility of building up tariffs in conjunction with the employers.

Family allowances were rejected in favor of an extension of social services by a vote of nearly two to one. The Congress, however, decided to press for shorter work-hours to cope with rationalization and also for the withdrawal of the older men from industry on an adequate pension.

During the year the membership affiliated had increased by 71,176 and the chances of getting one union to cover the mining industry are much improved by the Coal Mines Bill. As far as one could judge by the delegates to the Congress the trade unions are solidly behind the Labor Government although at times critical. The president's address was tame and rebuked the left-wing sections in the House of Commons. It has become the fashion in speeches to make a distinction between the realist and the socialist which is ominous. But there are healthy militant elements there which undoubtedly will be heard from in the struggles over the further expected attacks on wages.

MARK STARR.

IN OTHER LANDS

(Continued from page 24)

to defeat it. They are now in the unhappy position of having almost twice the number of unemployed that Baldwin and the Tories had.

ITALY, FRANCE AND THE BALKANS

Except for the desertion of the Geneva conference by Grandi before Briand made his statement on the United States of Europe no serious change is reported in the relations of France and Italy. Grandi thought he would be able to wreck Briand's plans but his abstention trick failed. Henderson of England remained to fight the United States of Europe plan but his opposition was futile in that the Frenchman got his subject considered and a special committee appointed to consider the plan. The number of Italy's unemployed increases and financially the ship of state is going on the rocks. Shrewd visitors to Italy back in this country say a revolution is scarcely more than a year away and that Mussolini will have to retire. His work in the Balkans and the execution of the Slavs have caused bad blood all over the South-East. A blaze may start in Jugoslavia and involve half of Europe before another year has expired. Europe outside of France is suffering from depression and like South America revolution is in the air.

PATRICK L. QUINLAN.

Business Depression Under Capitalism—1930

(Continued from Page 6)

shown the need of a more virile opposition, both political and economic on the part of progressives and liberals, within and without the Labor Movement, remains to be seen.

The well-entrenched forces of complacency and conservatism have so far had relatively little opposition. The control of political appointees, of the electorate, of the courts, of industrial conditions, and even of labor, is exemplified in hundreds of instances.

Will effective opposition begin with this period of depression? The issue is a clear cut one. As to whether or not this opposition will be revolutionary or evolutionary depends on the ability of us who favor evolutionary reform to mobilize.

If we wish it to be evolutionary change, by means of a third political party, the opportunity must be seized.

Two ardent champions of the progressive cause whose loss will be severely felt died within the past month. Ulysses Long, who was chairman of the Buffalo Branch of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action since its inception last year, died of natural causes while visiting relatives in Marshall, Texas. Mr. Long, though advanced in years, never let up on his activities in the Labor Movement, being recording secretary of the Molders' Union up to the day of his death.

The other member of the C. P. L. A., the Rev. Alfred S. Priddis, also of Buffalo, met an untimely death by drowning. He was only 35 years of age when he died.

Mr. Priddis is survived by his widow, who was at that time visiting friends in Rochester.

The C. P. L. A. deeply feels the loss of two of its most ardent supporters and extends its sympathy to the families of the deceased.

SYMPOSIUM

(Continued from page 15)

injunctions, the A. F. of L. puts up only a weak and formal front to "change the law." The spirit that pushed through the Adamson Act in 1916, that produced the Plumb plan after the war, is wholly lacking today. Organized labor's most vocal spokesman, typical of its spirit, is more interested in promoting an insurance company and in lining up with open-shop reactionaries in fighting reds than in building the Labor Movement.

Though an incurable optimist by nature, I see no hopeful prospect for American labor until, with class lines tighter, a new crew of leaders from the rank and file, fired with the old spirit of unrelenting struggle, take over the steering-wheel. The present A. F. of L. leadership is too fat, and too old for militant action. And a Labor Movement without guts to fight isn't worth its name.

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